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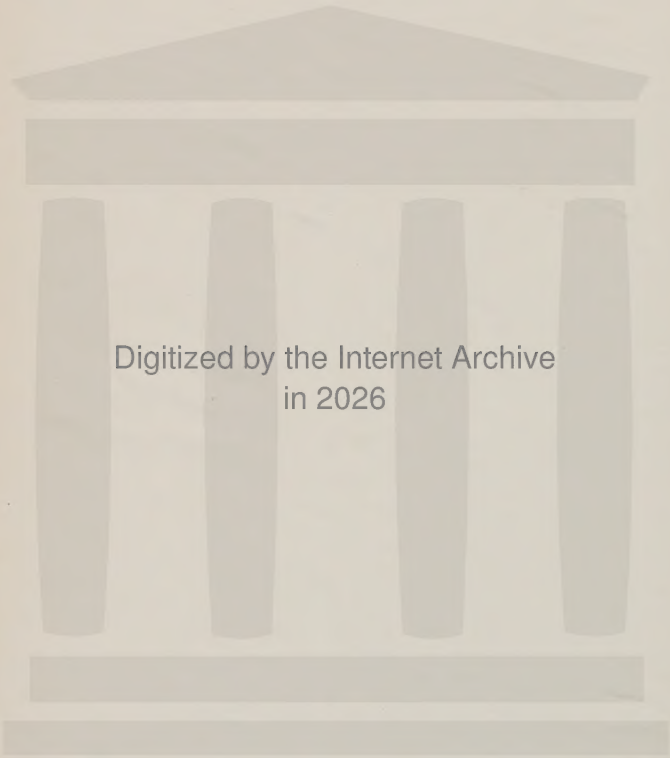
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THE DOCTRINE OF SIN

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THE DOCTRINE OF SIN

A CRITICAL AND HISTORICAL INVESTIGATION INTO THE VIEWS OF THE CONCEPT OF SIN HELD IN EARLY CHRISTIAN, MEDIAEVAL & MODERN TIMES

BY

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TO

MY WIFE

In Man there's failure, only since he left
The lower and inconscious forms of life.

BROWNING.

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THE DOCTRINE OF SIN

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

Stress was laid at a recent Conference[1] upon the urgent need for the reconsideration of the Doctrine of Sin, and it was plainly stated by one of the speakers that: "It is the duty of theologians to rethink their way through the problem, and not only to denounce sin but to expose it". It is the object of the present volume to undertake this duty, and with this purpose in view to call in the aid of history. By history is meant not merely the knowledge of facts, but of opinions and feelings which have prevailed in the past. The historical method is concerned not so much with the formulæ which finally came to be regarded as authoritative, as with widespread tendencies of thought, which, though they may not have ultimately secured supremacy, are really a part of the mind of the Church.

It is no longer possible to base the sense of Sin upon the teaching of Augustine, which has been somewhat erroneously identified with that of the Church. Augustinianism is by no means catholicism, and it is worth while to undertake a critical and historical review of Augustine's controversy with Pelagius in order to see how far from unanimously his views were really accepted. It may reasonably be contended that the teaching of Augustine as well as the teaching of Pelagius should have come under censure as being, in some respects at least, an innovation and contrary to the Vincentian maxim, "teneamus quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est,"

[1] The Ecumenical Methodist Conference, September, 1921.

for it is an admitted fact that the East never held nor gave its real support to the anti-Pelagian views of the West. Indeed, Vincentius in his famous treatise indirectly[1] referred to Augustinianism as a novelty, though he is very far from being a follower of Pelagius.

In spite of the vast service rendered by Augustine to the Church at large, it may well be asked whether he is not himself the author of some of our most pressing religious difficulties. To Augustine the world owes a great debt for recognising the power of the habit of sin and our inability to do right in spite of formal freedom of will, and also for perceiving the solidarity of the human race and the resulting participation of every child of man in the weakening of Human Nature caused by sin. We owe much, too, to Augustine's conception of Grace and to the theory of a universal Church which he based upon it. He did not, indeed, invent the doctrine of a visible organised Church and of the Sacraments as essential in sustaining spiritual life, but he developed what the ante-Nicenes had merely held as general principles; he laid stress upon these doctrines in a way which had never before been done, and he systematised and formulated them for the benefit of posterity.

But is our debt to Pelagius much less, unhappy though he was in the course into which, partly through misapprehension and partly through temperament, he was subsequently led? Men are only too ready even now to make weakness an excuse for sin, to be satisfied with a low moral standard and to forget or to ignore the essential need for individual effort.

Moreover, Pelagius, who was led by his special theory of Human Nature to reject the doctrine of the Fall, has clearly more claim to consideration now that the fact of the Fall stands under suspicion. Indeed, if we except his exaggerated view of free-will and his assertion of the possibility of sinlessness in man, we can hardly help admitting that intellectually at any rate Pelagius had often the better of Augustine. The reason is not far to seek. Pelagius was less involved than was Augustine in the

[1] See the present author's edition of *Vincentius of Lerins*, Intro. p. 26.

science of the day, and since this science was utterly imperfect, he has the advantage of being less compromised by it. It is quite possible to hold that Augustine was logically justified in his inferences, but unfortunately he argued from insufficient and inaccurate premises. Pelagius refused for the sake of logic to give the lie to universal experience. Augustine argued that logically man was totally corrupt. Pelagius, looking around him, saw too many proofs of goodness to allow the inference. Pelagius has been justified, Augustine condemned. Pelagius's insistence on the inalienable rights and responsibilities of the individual, which Augustine seriously underrated, drew attention to facts of Human Nature which no age of Christian thought should dare to neglect.

It is, moreover, impossible to pass over the contribution towards the solution of this problem made by the so-called Semipelagian school, which has been most strangely underestimated by theologians generally. The South Gallican Churches of the fifth century found themselves unable to agree either with Pelagius or with Augustine. Consequently they formed themselves into a middle party, led by John Cassian of Massilia, which insisted chiefly on co-operation between the will of man and the Grace of God. To this party the name Semipelagian was given, though it was a name they never applied to themselves. Indeed, they might with equal appropriateness have been called Semiaugustinians. Their opponents refused to recognise any middle party and regarded them as an offshoot of the Pelagians. This, however, was manifestly unfair, for in steering a middle course between the extravagances of Augustinianism and the errors of Pelagianism the Semipelagians conferred upon the Church a valuable service. Throughout the Middle Ages they exercised a most wholesome check upon the spread and development of extreme Augustinian views. It has been asserted that we are all Semipelagians to-day.[1] This statement we may have reason to regard as being not very far from the truth, since it is in close harmony with the tendencies of modern thought.

The view of sin held by the Reformers sheds little light

[1] Cooper-Marsdin, *The History of the Islands of the Levins* p. 80.

on the subject. In this respect the Reformation was retrograde rather than progressive. The leaders of this movement fell back upon the doctrine of Augustine, but they developed it into a fatalism destructive of all human effort. Luther could see nothing but total depravity in Human Nature. Birth-sin was regarded as involving man in greater guilt than actual sin, and in Calvinism we have a view of Human Nature which is more paralysing to the conscience than any theory of sin ever held either before or afterwards. These views, however, have to no inconsiderable extent influenced modern theological opinion, and the Church is still struggling to free herself from the prejudices and traditions imposed upon her by the past.

The problem of Sin has been much to the fore in recent years, and modern views and modern discoveries will claim consideration in the general reconstruction of ideas and re-enunciation of theological truths which the future will inevitably demand. But in spite of much good work done recently with regard to the problem of the sinfulness of Human Nature and the universality of evil, the world still awaits a doctrine of Sin which will satisfy the demands of anthropological science and the experience of the Christian conscience. In fact, no teaching on this subject which cannot be accepted alike by the theologian and the scientist can be regarded as satisfactory and convincing.

The purpose of the present treatise is to investigate the history of the Doctrine of Sin, and, in order to this, to review the positions of Augustine and Pelagius, to examine the defects in the views of each of them, to consider the value of their respective contributions to theology, and to trace the subsequent development of thought on the problem that resulted from the controversy. It is hoped that this study may be of service to those who are interested in the re-expression of ideas on this momentous subject.

An attempt will be made in the last chapter to suggest the outlines of a constructive theory of the Concept of Sin based on the new knowledge of psychology. The need in our day is for a reformation in the teaching of the Church —a reformation no less deep and searching than that of

the sixteenth century, for the teaching of the Church, in so far as it is based on Augustinianism, has of late years been seriously discredited both from the standpoint of morality and of science. The world cries out, not for a new religion, nor for a new revelation, but for a re-interpretation of the cardinal principles of theology, so that it may be possible to reconcile the teaching of the Church with the claims of conscience and with the results of modern discovery.

It must be admitted that nothing would be of more practical value at the present time than a restatement of the Doctrine of Sin in the light of our latest knowledge, and that such a restatement is called for on every hand in order that this doctrine may become intellectually possible of acceptance.

One other thing must be said—since it is of the greatest possible importance. New knowledge is ours to-day, and we have no right to reject that knowledge, because in some measure at least it modifies the conclusions reached in earlier ages. What was once said by the learned Puffendorf with respect to interpretation is fitly applied to the Doctrine of Sin as held in the past—"eximendi sunt illi casus, quos exemturus fuerat ipse legislator, si super tali casu consultus fuisset". We have not merely to ask what Augustine or any other theologian said, but what, had he lived in our days, and had he possessed our knowledge, he would have said. What he said and what he would have said are not necessarily the same.

CHAPTER II

THE DOCTRINE OF SIN AS HELD IN THE FIRST FOUR CENTURIES

ANALYSIS

§ 1. Teaching of the N.T. on the subject of Original Sin.

§ 2. Views of Irenaeus.

§ 3. Greek Anthropology: Early Alexandrines.

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§ 13. Summary of the Eastern View of Sin.

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CHAPTER II

THE DOCTRINE OF SIN AS HELD IN THE FIRST FOUR CENTURIES

§ 1.

Teaching of the N.T. on the Subject of Original Sin.

The universality of human sinfulness and the need of Divine Grace in Christ to redeem mankind from it have been an acknowledged tenet in the doctrinal system of the Christian Church from the beginning, but it is deserving of notice that the doctrine of Original Sin and the imputation of Adam's transgression to his posterity rests upon the very slenderest foundation of N.T. authority. Christ did not in any recorded utterance mention Adam and Eve, neither did He suggest that human sin was the consequence of an act of disobedience in the Garden of Eden. Had He done so, it is probable that this teaching, which seems to have been popular in certain rabbinical schools in His time, would have been preserved. The N.T. assumes, of course, that all men are sinners and that all men are mortal; but as to how they became sinners or how they became mortal nothing either explicitly or implicitly is said, except at the most in two passages of S. Paul's Epistles, and these of uncertain interpretation. If these two passages had not been written or if they had been lost, there is nothing in the rest of the N.T. to suggest even remotely the doctrine of Original Sin.[1]

In the 5th chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, S. Paul speaks of sin entering into the world through one man, and as a result death passing to all because all had sinned. The difficulty of explaining these verses satisfactorily—a difficulty into which it is unnecessary now to enter, but which can be realised at once by a glance into the various commentators on the passage—renders it precarious in the extreme

[1] See Dale, *Christian Doctrine* p. 325.

to base any arguments upon it and impossible to prove any doctrine from its contents.

Again, in the 15th chapter of his First Epistle to the Corinthians, S. Paul writes: "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive". It is perfectly clear that this comparison is made merely for the purpose of illustration, and that no evidence for the existence of a doctrine can be fairly drawn from a mere illustration where the language used is just as likely to be figurative as literal. In both these passages it is not S. Paul's direct object to explain the cause either of human sin or of human mortality. His purpose is to declare that "in Christ men are made righteous and are to rise again from the dead".[1]

In view, therefore, of the lack of any real N.T. authority for the doctrine of Original Sin, it is not surprising to find that the Apostolic Fathers are silent on the subject and that after their time there was a considerable difference of opinion. This difference of opinion resolved itself into two main tendencies or lines of thought, one being the *Eastern* or *Greek* view, the other being the *Western* or *Latin* view. All, or at any rate the greater part, of the Fathers of the Greek Church before the time of Augustine denied any real Original Sin and knew nothing of any theory of an inherited corruption derived from Adam's sin; although in the writings of the leading theologians of the West in the third and fourth centuries it is easy to discover the germs of that other theory which became dominant in the Latin Church from the time of Augustine onwards.

It is proposed in the present chapter to give a brief survey of the views of the leading Fathers of the Early Church prior to Augustine on the subject of Original Sin, showing the sources from which this doctrine sprang and tracing its growth until it became a recognised dogma in the Christian Church.

§ 2.

(*a*) Irenaeus (A.D. 130–202).

The Greek apologists had no occasion to discuss the question of the influence of Adam's Fall upon his descendants,

[1] Dale, *Christian Doctrine* p. 326.

and did not in consequence say much about Original Sin nor form any theories on this subject. The first constructive theologian of the Church was Irenaeus, who represents neither Eastern nor Western thought exclusively. Born in Asia Minor in the middle of the second century and becoming in later years Bishop of Lyons in Gaul, he presents features peculiar to both Greek and Latin theology. As a natural result, his teaching on the subject of Original Sin, though it shows considerable advance upon the teaching of his predecessors, is nevertheless lacking in definiteness and consistency. As Dr. Tennant observes,[1] we find in this Father statements so conflicting and opposed as that man was made after the likeness and image of God ;[2] that both image and likeness were lost through Adam's Fall ;[3] that the image and likeness of God were both absent from man when he was first created and were afterwards to be acquired;[4] that man was created after the divine image alone,[5] the likeness being afterwards received through the Spirit,[6] but that it was subsequently lost by man, though he did not lose the image of God in which he was made.[7]

Two main lines of teaching, then, both more or less clearly defined but contrary the one to the other, are to be found in Irenaeus—the one corresponding with the Greek anthropology and derived from his early life in the East, and the other foreshadowing the development of thought peculiar to the West.

It should be noted that Irenaeus in many passages lays strong emphasis on the doctrine of human freedom. "Since man", he says, "from the beginning is endowed with a free will, and God, in whose similitude he was made, has a free will, the advice is always given to man to hold fast the good which is perfected by obedience to God."[8] Freedom of will is a test of character ; "for we have received freedom of will, in which condition a man's reverence, fear and love of God are more severely tested".[9] This brings additional responsibility ; "for man, being endowed with reason and

[1] *The Fall and Original Sin* p. 285. [2] *Adv. Haer.* v 28, 4.
[3] Ib. iii 18, 1. [4] Ib. iv 38, 3. [5] Ib. v 16, 1.
[6] Ib. v 6, 1. [7] Ib. v 16, 1. [8] Ib. iv 37, 4.
[9] Ib. iv 16, 5, libertatis potestatem acceperimus ; in qua magis probatur homo si revereatur et timeat et diligat Dominum.

in this respect being like God, is a perfectly free agent, with the power of self-determination, and is, therefore, responsible for the fact that he sometimes becomes wheat and sometimes chaff". [1] The intention and purpose of God in giving man freedom of will is that he may choose the better course (ut electionem meliorum faciat), and the result of good moral choice is communion with God; separation from Him of the opposite.[2] The possession of free-will is, therefore, not only a privilege which distinguishes man from other created things; it is also a responsibility. Hence it is clear that Irenaeus, with such Eastern thinkers as Origen, insisted on freedom of will as the endowment of rational creatures, and that though not going so far as to assert the self-sufficiency of man, afterwards known as Pelagianism, he regarded the freedom of the individual as expressed in the image of God, sometimes implying that it is the possession of this freedom which makes man capable of receiving incorruptibility.

The logical inference from all this is that the original destination of mankind was not regarded as having been abrogated by the Fall. Harnack [3] goes so far as to say that the Fall has in Irenaeus a 'teleological significance': by which is meant that he seeks to palliate man's Fall, and regards it, so far from being an unmixed evil, as achieving an educational purpose, and as being the means to a foreordained end, viz. the redemption of the world by Christ. Man's destination is to be like God, and the attainment of this likeness (*ὁμοίωσις*) is the ultimate object of his creation and is only to be accomplished by God dwelling in man and thus uniting him to Himself. Hence follows the necessity of the Incarnation in God's original scheme. Man was not made perfect. He only possessed the power of becoming perfect—the germ or potentiality of perfection. Thus the Fall, according to Irenaeus, did not deprive the human race of the power of development nor of freedom of will nor of communion with God. Thus far Irenaeus is in close accordance with the Eastern mode of thought.

[1] *Adv. Haer.* iv 4, 3.

[2] Ib. v 27, 1, *ὅσοι ἀφίστανται κατὰ τὴν γνώμην αὐτῶν τοῦ θεοῦ τούτοις τὸν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ χωρισμὸν ἐπάγει* . . . separavit semetipsum a Deo voluntaria sententia.

[3] *History of Dogma* (Eng. Trans.) vol. ii p. 270.

But there is another side to the teaching of Irenaeus bearing upon the problem of Original Sin, which approximates more to the anthropology of the West and corresponds rather with the views of such writers as Tertullian, Hippolytus and Cyprian. This line of thought is the logical result of his doctrine of the Person and Work of Christ, and in this doctrine the chief importance of Irenaeus as a theologian consists. The fundamental thought in his exposition of the Incarnation and of the Atonement is that Christ, in order to conduct the human race to its divine destination, must Himself recapitulate and pass through all the stages of ordinary human life in order to consecrate each of them by His own presence; and that in order to unite the end with the beginning, He must gather into Himself all that originally belonged to the essence of humanity, restoring it to what it was when it was first created. This profound conception of a "recapitulatio" or ἀνακεφαλαίωσις of humanity in Christ (derived, doubtless, from S. Paul's expression in Eph. i 10) is a valuable contribution to theological thought, and is much more in accord with modern views of the Atonement than the theories which confine saving grace to the Cross and Passion of our Lord. Irenaeus did not restrict the work of the Atonement to the Crucifixion, which merely marked for him the consummation of the Incarnation; with a broader view than any who had preceded him, he saw that the whole life of Christ was a restoration to man of communion with God. Suffering and death were the ordinary lot of man, and therefore they were to be recapitulated or experienced to the full in the life of Him who summed up all conditions of this mortal life in His own experience. This theory, however, leads Irenaeus to conclusions which are inconsistent with what he says elsewhere and which are opposed to the line of thought described above. He is now led to maintain that man was not created imperfect, and that the image and likeness [1] of God were the possession of Adam from the

[1] *Adv. Haer*, v 16, 1, 2, where the image and likeness of God are original endowments of human nature, restored to man by the Word of God at His Incarnation. Elsewhere they are spoken of as endowments gradually to be attained by man. According to the Schoolmen the image and the likeness of God are separated, the "image" of God implying the higher mental faculties, the "likeness": the possession of the Spirit.

beginning, but were lost by the Fall. The uniting of the end with the beginning is a necessary element in the doctrine of recapitulation. "When He became incarnate in man, He summed up in Himself the long roll of humanity, supplying us in a concise manner with salvation, so that what we lost in Adam, namely, the being in the image and likeness of God, we might recover in Christ Jesus." [1]

Then again, developing the Pauline doctrine of the solidarity of the race in Adam, Irenaeus taught that, as restored humanity is summed up in and represented by Christ, so the human race is to be identified with Adam, sinning against God in him, and through him becoming subject to death.

In v 17, 1 sin is described as a debt to God, but there is little trace in Irenaeus of the ideas of "propitiation" and "satisfaction" which his legal training helped Tertullian to formulate, and still less of the theory of a ransom paid to the devil. As a matter of fact, sin is, in Irenaeus, to a certain extent, kept in the background. Death and life are with him the absorbing themes. Thus he speaks of Adam as being "initium morientium", just as Christ was "initium viventium", depriving death of its prey and bringing back to life man who had been slain.[2]

Irenaeus thus held that there was some sort of organic union of the human race with Adam, whereby the first sin became the collective deed of all subsequent generations of mankind,[3] but nowhere does he attempt to define the nature of this connexion, nor does he hint at the doctrine that Adam's posterity already existed seminally in him and so was identified with him when he sinned. The union of which he speaks may perhaps, as Dr. Tennant says, be described as "mystical". [4] It is rather to be regarded as a figurative and pregnant expression than a relationship to be taken literally or to be explained philosophically.

[1] *Adv. Haer.* iii 18, 1, in compendio nobis salutem praestans = *συντόμως*.

[2] Ib. v 21, 1, uti quemadmodum per hominem victum descendit in mortem genus nostrum, sic iterum per hominem victorem ascendamus in vitam.

[3] Ib. v 16, 3, in primo quidem Adam offendimus, non facientes ejus praeceptum, also v 34, 2, percussus est homo initio in Adam inobediens, etc.

[4] Tennant, *The Fall and Original Sin* p. 289.

In conclusion it may be remarked that Irenaeus knows nothing about the second element in the Augustinian theory of Original Sin, viz. the inherited corruption of Human Nature. True, he speaks of death as inherited,[1] but he does not mean by that that Adam's Fall was the cause of an ingrained bias to sinfulness in man, nor that human infirmity is in any way due to the reception of an inborn taint. The method whereby sin is produced in mankind as a result of Adam's transgression is left entirely undefined; the 'will' and not the 'flesh' is regarded as the source of all sin, and nothing whatever is said about evil concupiscence.

Irenaeus, then, on the whole may be said to incline more to the Eastern than to the Western mode of thought on the subject of Original Sin, and while foreshadowing some elements of the later Latin doctrine, he nevertheless preserves the older and more indefinite mode of apprehending the problem of Human Nature in its relation to free-will, sin and grace.

§ 3.

(*b*) Greek Anthropology.

(i) *Views of the Early Alexandrines.*

The views of the Ancient Church during the second and third centuries in reference to sin and to the power of free-will in apostate man were influenced very largely by the controversy with Gnosticism. As a result of their dualistic theory of the universe the Gnostics maintained that man is sinful by creation because all creation is the work of the Demiurge. They denied that man is a responsible agent and refused to admit that he has any freedom of will. In opposing this view, the Greek Fathers strongly insisted on the Biblical doctrine that man was created holy and a free moral agent and that by the misuse of his moral freedom he is himself the author of his own sin. They were content to claim for man a plenary power to do good and the ability to turn from sin by the exercise of his own inherent energy (*αὐτεξούσιον*), without concerning themselves with the consequences of human apostasy in the moral agent and in the

[1] *Adv. Haer.* v 1, 3.

human will itself. The result is that Eastern speculation in general and Alexandrine speculation in particular is characterised by very strong emphasis being laid on the reality of human freedom.

§ 4.

Clement (A.D. 190–203).

In consequence of his view of sin as that which is irrational and the fruit of ignorance, Clement of Alexandria does not give the doctrine of the Fall any prominent place in his teaching. The introduction of sin into the world he regards as in some sense connected with the transgression of Adam, and this in turn with the victory of Christ over death; but of the relation of that first sin to us and to our sins very little is said. Of the Fall itself Clement gives the following somewhat allegorical account: "The first man, when in Paradise, sported free, because he was the child of God; but when he succumbed to pleasure (for the serpent allegorically signifies pleasure crawling on its belly), he was as a child seduced by lusts, and grew old in disobedience; and by disobeying his Father, dishonoured God. Such was the influence of pleasure".[1] Adam, then, was not created perfect in the sense that he could not transgress, but in the sense that he was adapted by nature to receive virtue,[2] and that he lacked none of the distinctive characteristics of "the idea and the form" of a man.[3] By his deliberate choice of evil he exchanged an immortal for a mortal life, but not for ever.[4] In this respect Clement agrees with Irenaeus and the Greek Fathers that man's original endowment was not a developed state of virtue (for in a state of original righteousness Adam could not have sinned), but merely an aptitude for perfection.

The existence of sin in the world does not, in the eyes of Clement, depend upon the Fall of Adam. We only lie under the sin of Adam in respect of the likeness of sin.[5] Man

[1] *Protrept.* xi 111 (trans. of Anti-Nicene Library).
[2] *Strom.* vi 12, 96. [3] Ib. iv 23, 150. [4] Ib. ii 19, 98.
[5] *Adum. in Jud.*, Stah., vol. iii p. 208. Sic etiam peccato Adae subjacemus secundum peccati similitudinem.

commits sin as the result of choice, and we need look no farther for its origin than his freedom of will. In fact, the causes of all sin may be reduced to two, namely, ignorance and weakness.[1] No one chooses evil as evil, but, misled by its attraction, he erroneously supposes it to be good. But for this illusion men are themselves responsible. It rests with them to be delivered from ignorance and to save themselves from such misconceptions.[2] Sin is that which is contrary to right reason; hence to be instructed and disciplined by the Lord is to be set free from sin. This emphasising of the voluntary nature of sin, the responsibility of the individual in committing it, and the power of man to avoid it, leaves no room for the doctrine of inherited sin, still less of inherited guilt. Not only is such a doctrine entirely absent from the writings of Clement,[3] but it is opposed to his psychological views and to his theological system generally. For example, he rejects Traducianism, with which the doctrine of hereditary sin was at first closely connected, and in commenting on David's statement in Ps. li, " In sin did my mother conceive me ", he says that this refers to Eve, the mother of the living, and adds that in any case, even if he were conceived in sin, yet he himself was not in sin, nor was he himself sin.[4] Thus, even if Clement believed in the Fall of Adam as a fact, he does not derive from it the theory of a congenital taint nor anything resembling the doctrine of Original Sin.

Lastly, Clement can see no connexion between the Fall and physical death. He nowhere implies that men in general owe their mortality to Adam. Sin, he says, is death;[5] but that is the death of the soul—not the death which dis-

[1] *Strom.* vii 16, 101. [2] Ib. i 17, 84.

[3] One passage in Clement is quoted as nearly approaching the doctrine that Adam's sin involved posterity, viz. *Protrept.* xi. In speaking there of the redeeming work of Christ, he says, " and most marvellous of all, man that had been deceived by pleasure and *bound fast to corruption*, had his hands unloosed and was set free ". But it is most likely that here, as elsewhere, Clement is thinking of Adam as the type and not the source of sin.

[4] *Strom.* iii 16, 100. Neander points out that Clement was unconsciously combating the doctrine of the North African Church, which was at that very time first appearing in Tertullian.

[5] *Prot.* xi 115; *Strom.* iii 9, 64.

solves the union between soul and body, but that which dissolves the union between the soul and the truth. In commenting on S. Paul's statement in Rom. v 12–14,[1] "By sin death has passed to all men", he explains it to mean that by a natural necessity of the divine economy death follows on birth, and the dissolution of soul and body necessarily follows their union. This compulsory relationship involves no participation on our part in the sin of Adam. This denial that bodily death is a punishment for the Fall is an anticipation on Clement's part of the teaching of Pelagius.

To sum up, the existence of sin Clement holds to be sufficiently explained by the freedom of the will. Necessitarianism and Predestination as taught by the Gnostics would, he points out, cancel the guilt of unbelief by freeing man from responsibility and leave no room for repentance or forgiveness. Evil is the deliberate act of man and is not to be ascribed to any congenital taint in Human Nature. It is only wilful sin that God punishes. The soul is not begotten; it enters the body separately, preceding the advent of the reasoning faculty.[2] Men fall as Adam fell, not because of his sin, but through their own lust.

But while denying Original Sin and while maintaining that the first motion towards holiness is the work of man, Clement admits the need of Christ's help. The object of His Incarnation and death was to deliver us from guilt and to accomplish our salvation, which man is unable to achieve by his own unaided power.[3]

§ 5.

Origen (A.D. 185–254).

Following in the footsteps of his teacher and predecessor in the Catechetical School of Alexandria, Origen laid great emphasis on the free-will of man, and this doctrine forms an integral part of his philosophical views, but his

[1] *Strom.* iii 9.

[2] Ib. vi 16, ἐπεισκρίνεται δὲ ἡ ψυχὴ καί προεισκρίνεται τὸ ἡγεμονικόν, ᾧ διαλογιζόμεθα, οὐ κατὰ τὴν τοῦ σπέρματος καταβολὴν γεννώμενον.

[3] *Paed.* i 4.

doctrinal system was developed on original and highly speculative lines, and he imported into Christian theology ideas which were destined to find echoes in the thought of later centuries.

With regard to the Fall, Origen held the view that it was pre-mundane, and that the account of Adam's transgression and expulsion from Paradise in the Book of Genesis is purely allegorical.[1] Thus the creation of the world as described in the Bible is, in his view, not the commencement but an intermediate stage of spiritual history. Life on earth is the continuation of a prior existence, and corporeal being is the consequence of our fall from virtue in that state. This doctrine of the pre-existence of souls, which seems to be derived from the Platonic myth in the *Phaedrus*, forms an essential part of Origen's scheme, and in this respect he ranks himself as an opponent of both the creatianist and the traducian theories as to their origin.

But this theory does not, in Origen's view, militate against the doctrine of free-will.[2] The fallen spirit still retains its freedom and has not lost the power of restoring itself to its original condition. The image of God, stamped upon man at his creation, guarantees to him the possibility of reaching perfection; but he can only hope to attain finally to God's likeness by his own efforts and by the constant practice of virtue.

That freedom of will is the prerogative of all men is a principle of the utmost importance in Origen's system. In combating the Gnostics, who held the doctrine of absolute Predestination, he vehemently asserts that free-will is bound up with reason, and is possessed by every moral creature. The faculty of reason enables man to choose either good or evil, so that the will *initiates* both holiness and sin.[3] According to this theory of the indifferentism of the human will, which Origen shared with Clement, it is as incorrect to deny

[1] *De Princip.* iv i 16. See also *Contra Cels.* vii 50. It should be noticed, however, that elsewhere, e.g. *Comm. in Rom.* v, he treats the Fall story as historical.

[2] Ib. iii 1, where Origen enunciates his view of human freedom and examines the Scripture texts which relate to this subject.

[3] Ib. i 5, 2. "Every rational creature is capable of earning praise or blame—praise, if, in conformity to that reason which it possesses, it advance to better things; blame, if it fall away from the right course."

to the will the power of holiness as it would be to deny to it the power to sin. In this formal conception of freedom it is to be noticed that no account is taken of the result of past choice in the attainment of good or in forming the habit of evil, and in assigning the beginning of salvation to man's own effort, the Alexandrines furnish a precedent for the Semipelagian view of Grace held in the West in the fifth century.

These two doctrines of pre-existence and free-will completely dominated Origen's conception of sin. The former, in his view, accounts for the fact, and the latter for the guilt, of sin. Sin is universal because it is inseparable from man's earthly environment. Man enters life in a sinful condition because his soul was stained with sin in its former state. In disputing with Celsus, Origen distinctly ascribes the origin of sin to a pre-natal Fall.[1] Thus Origen, unlike Clement, arrived at some form of a doctrine of Original Sin. In developing this theory, he arrived at the conclusion that there is a certain hereditary pollution[2] attaching to everyone born into the world. 'Spermatic germs' of evil are inherent in every human being. Following Plato and S. Paul, he subdivided the constitution of man into three parts, body, soul and spirit.[3] Of these the last, which is the rational and spiritual principle, is the highest, having, according to Origen, come down from the angelic sphere and being joined to the body through the medium of the soul, which includes the principle of animal life. The soul, then, which derives a taint of sin from its former existence, stands midway, so to speak, between the weak flesh and the willing spirit. Original Sin is confined to the two lower subdivisions of man's constitution, viz. body and soul; it cannot exist in the rational spirit, which always remains intact and cannot inherit anything because it is not itself propagated. Thus Original Sin[4] is traced to a purely physical cause, and was, therefore, not regarded as truly and properly culpable by

[1] *Contra Celsum* vii 50.

[2] For the doctrine of the physical heredity of sin see his *Comm. in Rom.* v.

[3] *In Joh.* ii 9, xxxii 11; *In Matt.* x 11.

[4] Origen's views of a 'sordes peccati' are chiefly found in his *Comm. in Rom.* v.

Origen. Sin, in the strict sense, is the act of the individual will, and only in so far as it is actually committed by man does it involve him in guilt. The reason for this is that evil is not invincible. With God's aid the tendency to sin may be overcome. All depends upon the use man makes of his faculty of free-will. The guilt of sin is bound up with the idea of freedom. For though Origen regards the sin of all men as in some sense inherited from Adam, he by no means accepts the doctrine of total depravity. Man has an innate disposition towards good as well as evil. In other words, he has the law of God written in his heart.

Origen also, like Irenaeus, held the doctrine of the solidarity of mankind, and was the first to account for this by the conception of the seminal presence in Adam of all his posterity.[1] But the inference he draws from this idea is widely different from the conclusions based upon the same fact by Augustine. So far from seeing in this theory a physical explanation of the universal taint of sin in mankind, Origen preferred the view which later came to be looked upon as the peculiar tenet of Pelagius, and regarded sin as the result of example and of training, and not as due to any connexion or identity between posterity and the progenitor. "The individual", he says, "cannot dissociate himself from humanity in the aggregate. Between parents and children there is a subtle affinity of such a kind that all who are born into the world are not only the sons but the disciples of sinners, and they are urged to sin not so much by natural connexion (natura) as by training."[2]

To sum up, Origen taught a doctrine of the Fall and Original Sin which to some small extent resembled that which subsequently reached its developed form in Augustine, but was far more indefinite and differed in certain material points. He sometimes regards the Fall story in Genesis as allegorical and sometimes as historical. He holds the doctrine of the pre-existence of souls and treats Original Sin as a condition inseparable from man's whole earthly

[1] *In Joh.* xx 21, but especially *In Rom.* v, Si Levi, qui generatione quarta post Abraham nascitur, in lumbis Abrahae fuisse perhibetur, multo magis omnes qui in hoc mundo nascuntur et nati sunt, in lumbis erant Adae, cum adhuc esset in paradiso.

[2] *In Rom.* v 18.

surroundings, owing to a pre-natal Fall. He also teaches that there is some hereditary taint of sin, but denies man's responsibility for this taint and maintains that it can be overcome by will. He minimises the heinousness of Adam's sin, and repudiates the idea of the total depravity of the human race. He believes in the solidarity of mankind, but is emphatic in his rejection of Original Guilt.

The one respect in which Origen's system may be said to anticipate the teaching of Augustine is this: he held that physical heredity plays some undefined part in the propagation of sin, maintaining that each individual comes into the world in a "state of sinfulness" and is not free from taint at birth. Hence the need of baptism to wash away the stain. He was also the first to explain race unity by seminal existence in Adam—an idea which played no small part in the doctrine of Augustine.

On the other hand, his views in other respects are, with a few modifications, the generally accepted Eastern opinions. He denied that there is any guilt attached to birth-sin, or that concupiscence is sinful until it is indulged in, and he rejected the doctrine of the total corruption of the race. He laid great stress on freedom of the will, somewhat ignoring the force of habit and maintaining that there are always the seeds of good as well as of evil in the heart of man, and he held that the first steps towards holiness come from man, but that to complete a good action and to work out his own salvation he needs divine aid and the co-operation of God. Lastly, in his teaching on the subject of the propagation of sin and inherited taint (sordes peccati), with regard to which he is neither very clear nor consistent, he seems to incline to the view that sin is rather due to the force of example and education than to physical heredity.

§ 6.

(ii) *Views of the Later Alexandrine School.*

Great though the influence of Origen was on subsequent theological thought, his teaching received considerable modification at the hands of the Greek thinkers who succeeded

him, and who flourished not only in Alexandria but in the other parts of the Greek-speaking world. The Eastern Fathers tended to ignore those features in Origen's system which might be said to favour the type of doctrine regarding Original Sin which was rapidly gaining favour in the West, and they resolutely adhered to the traditional views of the Eastern Church respecting free-will and the nature of sin. But there was a reaction against his Platonic speculations on the subject of human sinfulness as derived from man's original estate, a reaction which took the form of the more literal interpretation of the Fall story in the Book of Genesis and a fuller recognition of the indirect effects of Adam's sin upon the human race. The later Alexandrines exhibit a modification of Origen's views in the denial of the pre-existence of souls[1] and the substitution of the theory of Creatianism; at the same time there are traces of a more systematic attempt to define the universality of sin in its relation to the transgression of Adam without any admission of a propagated sinfulness of the will.

§ 7.

Athanasius (A.D. 296–373).

Athanasius was not a systematic theologian. Unlike Irenaeus or Origen, he had little interest in theological speculation as such, nor did he attempt to elaborate the many problems in Christian doctrine which were in his day awaiting solution. His theological greatness lies in his determined subordination of everything to the central fact of the redemption, and his clear estimate of the position and importance to be assigned to the Person of the Saviour. The doctrine of the Trinity monopolised the attention of Athanasius almost to the exclusion of everything else, and he exhibits his anthropological views only in so far as they bear upon the Person and work of the Redeemer. His firm grasp of soteriological principles made him realise that Human Nature was changed by the Incarnation, but his views as

[1] This theory fell more and more into discredit, until it was finally condemned at the Synod of Constantinople, A.D. 553.

to the original state of mankind and the effects of the Fall have to be gathered from various remarks made in different parts of his writings, of which the most significant occur in the treatise *De Incarnatione*. First, then, we learn that Athanasius did not hold the doctrine of Original Righteousness. Man was not created in a state of perfection, but only with a capacity for perfection.[1] Neither was man before the Fall immortal, except prospectively.[2] Death would in any case have ensued, but death of a different kind from that experienced by unredeemed mankind.[3] Without minimising in the least the evil effects of the transgression of Adam, Athanasius did not hold that there was such a vast difference between the condition of fallen and unfallen man as has usually been supposed to exist.

The change wrought by the Fall was in the eyes of Athanasius largely physical.[4] Man's original state was corrupted by it. In fact, the Fall is regarded by Athanasius as a relapse of mankind to the condition of 'nature', above which they were originally raised by being created in the "Divine Image". As a natural being, man is unable to maintain his proper relation to God, but by reason of the divine image he is able to do so. The image of God in man is regarded by Athanasius as a supernatural endowment, but it is an inalienable possession in the sense that it may be impaired but not absolutely lost.[5] By the Fall the image of God was impaired and the process of corruption was begun. This is what Athanasius means by *φθόρα*. But it is to be noticed that while Athanasius admits that all subsequent generations have been born in this "natural state" into which Adam fell, he more usually regards the fallen state of the human race as having been brought about gradually and not as the result of Adam's one great sin.[6] To arrest this corruption, therefore, the Incarnation was necessary. The presence of the Word in human body was essential for the restoration

[1] *Orat.* ii 66, 67 (*τέλειος κτισθείς*). [2] *De Incar.* iii 4.

[3] Ib. xxi 1, 2, where he speaks of natural death as mere dissolution without perishing.

[4] *ζωή, θάνατος, φθόρα* and *ἀφθαρσία* play a prominent part in his handling of the soteriological problem. [5] *De Incar.* xiv.

[6] Ib. vi 1. The imperfect tense is used to mark the process of deterioration as being gradual (*ἠφανίζετο*).

of the race. And as man had incurred the penalty of death, death must take place to satisfy the sentence. The death of Christ, therefore, put an end to death regarded as a penal exaction. This is the meaning of His victory over death. His death is to us the beginning of life, and by His resurrection Human Nature is exalted, made incorruptible, and raised to a share in the Divine Nature, thus becoming superior to what it was at first.

This idea became from the time of Athanasius onwards a special characteristic of Eastern Theology. Former Fathers, e.g. Origen, had thought of the Incarnation as involving merely a restoration of Human Nature to its original state ; Athanasius and his successors regarded it as effecting an improvement upon that state.

With respect, then, to Original Sin, Athanasius certainly held that in some sense Adam's sin affected his posterity. In one place he says that " the devil spread the sin of Adam over all men " [1]—a statement which apparently contains in an undeveloped form the doctrine of the propagation of Original Sin, but Athanasius is for the most part content with alluding in very general terms to the method whereby sin is transmitted, so that it is not easy to discover how he conceived the race to be concerned in Adam's sin, or how he regarded sin as capable of being propagated unless it be so in the ordinary course of nature by physical generation. In any case, this admission of Athanasius that by the transgression of Adam sin passed to all men [2] falls very far short of the Augustinian theory on the subject, in that it by no means involves the belief that there is a general disturbance of man's nature owing to the influence of Adam's sin nor that there is any necessary connection between Original Sin and concupiscence.[3]

Athanasius, then, regards Christ the Incarnate Son of God as the centre of the religious history of mankind, holding the view that the religious and moral progress of the race was re-directed by the Incarnation, being thus guided towards

[1] *De Incar.* ii 9. [2] *Contra Arian.* i 51.

[3] It is shown by Dr. Melville Scott in his monograph *Athanasius on the Atonement* that Athanasius regards Christ as having assumed man's nature in its fallen condition. If this contention be justified, it is evident that he did not regard the Fall so seriously as was done by Augustine.

its divine destiny and enabled to run on the lines designed for it from the first.

The Athanasian doctrine of the original state of man and of his religious history is free from a good deal which in traditional theology offends many modern thinkers. Wider knowledge coupled with scientific discoveries has established the fact that mankind did not commence its development with a perfect nature, but has gradually passed through many lower phases of evolution from an uncivilised and undeveloped condition to a stage of morality and religious feeling which has not even yet reached completion or perfection, but which is gradually progressing to a higher and nobler end, the character and nature of which we are not yet in a position to estimate, but which may appropriately be described as likeness to or even identity with God. This conception is hard to reconcile with orthodox theology as we know it at present, but it is satisfactory to find that the Athanasian account of sin and its consequences does not conflict with the pronouncements of modern knowledge, but leaves ample scope for the acceptance of the results of anthropological research without sacrificing any of the essential and cardinal truths of the Christian faith.

§ 8.

Cyril of Jerusalem (315–386).

Cyril of Jerusalem, like Athanasius, did not deal directly with the problem of sin from a metaphysical point of view, and his references to the original state of mankind are still more isolated and are scattered throughout his work, but we gather from several passages that he connects the universality of sin with Adam's Fall. The result of the Fall he describes as being "a very great wound in our nature," [1] and he speaks of physical death as being one of the consequences of it. "The sentence of death threatened against Adam", he says, "extended to him and to all his posterity, even unto those who had not sinned as Adam did when he disobeyed God by eating the forbidden fruit." [2] In this

[1] *Catecheses*, xii 7. [2] Ib. i 3.

connexion Cyril remarks that as infants have not sinned by a conscious and deliberate act of choice, they have not sinned at all, and that death passes upon them not as a penalty, but for other reasons.

In a sense, however, Cyril recognises that Adam's sin was also ours. "We have fallen", he writes, "we have been crippled. In a word, we are dead."[1] In some way or other it has left an effect on all men which accounts for the universality of sin. But when man sins he sins from choice and not because he must. Cyril makes no reference to an inborn taint, nor does he seem to recognise any hereditary bias to evil in man. He says: "When we come into the world we are sinless (*ἀναμάρτητοι*), but now we sin from choice".[2]

In these and similar statements it almost seems as if Cyril were setting himself in opposition to the Origenistic theory of a fall in a previous existence, and whether consciously or unconsciously, he also sets himself against the growing feeling of the reality of birth-sin and of the serious and universal effects of the disobedience of Adam.

§ 9.

Gregory of Nyssa (A.D. 350–390).

Of the Cappadocian Fathers we turn to Gregory of Nyssa for the fullest treatment of the doctrine of the Fall. Neither Basil nor Gregory of Nazianzus says very much about the original state of man, nor are their utterances on this subject either frequent or important, save that on one occasion Gregory of Nazianzus speaks of Adam's sin as "our" sin and implies that it involved us in condemnation and punishment,[3] thereby hinting at a doctrine of Original Guilt which was soon to figure so largely in the theological scheme of Augustine. In fact, the latter Father referred to Gregory of Nazianzus as a witness to the catholicity of his views, though it was scarcely fair to appeal to so vague and slight

[1] *Catecheses* ii 5.
[2] Ib. iv 19, *ἐλθόντες εἰς τόνδε τὸν κόσμον ἀναμάρτητοι, νῦν ἐκ προαιρέσεως ἁμάρτομεν.*
[3] *Orat.* xxxix 16.

an utterance as evidence for so novel a doctrine as Augustine formulated on this subject.

Though Gregory of Nyssa rejected Origen's theories of the pre-existence of souls, of the pre-temporal Fall, and of the world as a place of punishment, yet his views on the early history of mankind are undoubtedly coloured by the speculations of that thinker. Gregory displays a tendency to treat the narrative of Gen. i–iii somewhat loosely, regarding it as allegory rather than as history. With Origen he takes "the coat of skins", wherewith Adam and Eve were clothed after their sin, as nothing more than an expression denoting mortality. It is doubtful even whether he regards Adam himself as a historical character, for he does not speak of him so much as a personality as a type. Adam is the equivalent of human nature generally. "All men had the same freedom as Adam. All souls passed through Adam's history." Harnack (*Hist. of Dogma*, Eng. Trans., vol. iii p. 279) says: "Gregory here carries his speculation still further: God did not first create a single man, but the whole race in a previously fixed number; these collectively composed only one nature. They were really *one* man, divided into a multiplicity. Adam—that means all."

The state of man in Paradise before the Fall was in his view similar to that enjoyed by the angels, but though high, it was not as high as that rendered possible by the Incarnation. It was angelic because it had not yet been stained by sexual intercourse; but it was not the highest state, because the body was not yet transfigured by the Incarnation and enabled to live a holy life on earth.

The Fall represents the addition to man of an earthly and sensuous nature. Man was originally created a spiritual being, and this is what the Scripture means when it says that man was created in the image of God. But that part of our nature which we share with lower animals[1] was a subsequent creation, and these two different sides of man are opposed to one another. One of the consequences of the Fall, therefore, in Gregory's view, was the introduction

[1] *De Anima et Resurr.* (M. xlvi 148), ἐπεὶ οὖν ὅσα ἐκ τῆς ἀλόγου ζωῆς τῇ ἀνθρωπίνῃ κατεμίχθη φύσει οὐ πρότερον ἦν ἐν ἡμῖν πρὶν εἰς πάθος διὰ κακίας πεσεῖν τὸ ἀνθρώπινον.

of mortality and death for all, and another consequence was the commencement of human generation by physical means, for he maintained that man was originally designed to live a sexless life like the angels, men being multiplied by God "in a noble fashion".[1] Thus Gregory paved the way for and in a sense anticipated Augustine's identification of concupiscence with Original Sin. Concupiscence, which Gregory calls "*τὸ φρόνημα τῆς σαρκός*",[2] is in his eyes a necessary consequence of the Fall.

Gregory is thus the first Greek Father in whom we find the beginnings of the doctrine that Original Sin is distinctly due to the Fall. He speaks of the sinfulness of our nature [3] as something separate from the actual sin of individuals—a sinfulness inborn in man because we partake of Adam's physical characteristics, and he speaks of the transmission of sin through one to the whole race.[4] We share in Adam's Fall because we share in Adam's nature, and our corruption is derived from Adam by physical descent. He speaks, too, of inborn sin being removed by baptism.[5]

In a word, the essential ideas of Augustine's theory, which was so soon to dominate the Western Church, already appear, though in a rudimentary form, as integral elements of the anthropology of Gregory of Nyssa, and seem in the main to have been derived from the tentative teachings of Origen.

§ 10.

(iii) *Views of the Antiochene School.*

This school, which may be said to be represented by Chrysostom and by Theodore of Mopsuestia, adopted substantially the same anthropology as the later Alexandrines. They held the doctrine of the Adamic connexion only so far as the physical nature is concerned, and taught that

[1] *περὶ κατασκ. ἀνθρωπ.* 17.

[2] Migne xlvi 376 B.

[3] *De Orat. Domin.* 4, *ἀσθενὴς ἡ ἀνθρωπίνη φύσις πρὸς τὸ ἀγαθόν ἐστιν, ἅπαξ διὰ κακίας ἐκνευρισθεῖσα, κ.τ.λ.*

[4] A reference to *περὶ κατασκ. ἀνθρωπ.* ch. 29 shows that Gregory was a Traducian. For the transmission of sin see *De Beatitud.* 5.

[5] *Orat. Catech.* 35, *δι' ὧν ἐκλύεται πως ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς πρὸς τὸ κακὸν συμφυίας.* The significant *πως* seems to show that this idea is rather a suggestion than a dogma.

though there may be inherited evil or corruption, yet there is no such thing as inherited sin. The best representative of this school, and perhaps of Greek anthropology generally, is Chrysostom.

§ 11.

Chrysostom (347–407).

There is not much in Chrysostom's writings that can be adduced in favour of the doctrine of Original Sin except that he sees in universal mortality the direct result of Adam's sin.[1] The doctrine of propagation, according to him, applies only to the physical nature of man, and not to his moral or spiritual side. He concedes that Adam could beget mortal descendants, but not sinful descendants. In other words, Adam's sin brought corruption, i.e. a vitiated moral constitution, but not a sinful will, into the human race. Sin is entirely due to the individual choice of the will. Thus it seems that Chrysostom tends to minimise the results of the first transgression, though this was not the view of his contemporaries, for some Antiochenes thought that he went too far in asserting that mortality is a consequence of Adam's sin.

Chrysostom shrank from the notion that we can in any way share in the sin of Adam, and interpreted the words of S. Paul " for that all sinned " to mean nothing more than " all became mortal ". In his commentary on Rom. v 19, he speaks to this effect : " It is not unlikely that when Adam had sinned and become mortal, those who were of him should be so also. But how could it follow that from his disobedience another should become a sinner ? For a man so constituted would not even deserve punishment, if, that is, it was not from his own self that he became a sinner. What, then, does the word ' sinners ' mean here ? To me it seems to imply liability to suffering and death. For by Adam's death we all became mortal." Thus Chrysostom does not recognise any doctrine of inherited sinfulness, nor does he allow that man's freedom of will is affected by the

[1] *Hom. in Gen.* xiii 4, xv 4, vi 6, etc.

Fall or that concupiscence is of the nature of sin. He also anticipates the Semipelagian view of co-operation in the work of regeneration.[1] If man upon his side works towards holiness, God's Grace will come in to succour and to strengthen him. This view asserts a certain degree of right inclination remaining in the human will after apostasy, by means of which it can concur with the Divine Grace in the process of regeneration. This doctrine is known as synergism, and became the special tenet of the Semipelagian school. It taught that there are two efficients in regeneration; that the human will co-operates, in the strict sense of the term, with the Holy Spirit in the renewing act, and that there must be some motion towards holiness in the human heart before the Grace of God can work upon it. This is definitely the view of Chrysostom when he says: "It is necessary for us first to choose goodness, and when we have chosen it, then God introduces goodness from Himself. It is our function to choose beforehand, and to will, but it is God's function to finish and to bring to completion."[2]

§ 12.

Theodore of Mopsuestia (A.D. 392–428).

Theodore of Mopsuestia, as Dr. Tennant says,[3] may be almost called an avowed Pelagian, so far as the Doctrine of Sin is concerned. He denied even, what Chrysostom held, that Adam's transgression was the cause of mortality to all mankind.[4] Adam he regarded as being not so much the ancestor, as the type, of the human race. In the history of Adam we become acquainted with our natural disposition.[5] The Pauline passages which support the transmission of death initiated by sin he explains away, and maintains that death is a natural thing inseparable from our human constitution. "Adam was created mortal whether he sinned or not." He held strongly that everything turns on men's

[1] *Hom. in Rom.* xvi; *In Hebr.* xii.
[2] *Hom. in Hebr.* xii.
[3] *The Fall and Original Sin* p. 325.
[4] *Epist. ad Gal.* ii 15, 16.
[5] Harnack, *Hist. of Dogma* (Eng. Trans.) vol iii p. 281.

own actions, on effort and on heroic fighting against sin, yet he admitted that Human Nature did not attain sinlessness through this conflict, but only prepared itself to accept the redemption which was in Christ. Thus Theodore agrees entirely with Chrysostom in the opinion that man's free will takes the first step, which is afterwards made effective by God.

The doctrine of Original Sin was thus entirely repudiated by Theodore, and he stoutly defended, as against the champions of Augustine's theory, the view which regards the will of each man as being absolutely free and unbiased and able to choose either good or evil. Indeed, we observe in him, as in Chrysostom, many of the ideas afterwards to be identified with the so-called Semipelagian school founded by Cassian of Massilia.

§ 13.

Summary of the Eastern View of Sin.

A recapitulatory survey of Greek anthropology, which for its general type of doctrine abandoned the extreme position of Clement and Origen and adopted the more guarded statements of the Later Alexandrine school, reveals the following main characteristics:

1. All or at least the greater part of the Fathers of the Greek Church before Augustine denied any real Original Sin.

2. They allowed a propagated physical corruption in the human race resulting in general mortality, but asserted that this is not sin and that it does not involve mankind in guilt.

3. The solidarity of the human race is not denied, and is referred to its physical connexion with Adam, but this solidarity relates only to the corporeal and sensuous nature and does not extend to the voluntary and rational side of mankind.

4. The will of man is not propagated, but is created in each individual and is free and spontaneous in its action.

5. The will takes the initiative in regeneration; but though the first to commence the good work, it cannot by itself complete it. To this end Divine aid is necessary, and God's power co-operates with the human will, enabling

it to turn from evil and to do the good which, however willing, it would of itself be powerless to bring to completion.

§ 14.

(c) Latin Anthropology.

It has been shown that in the Greek Church the older and more indefinite mode of apprehending the doctrines of Grace and free-will had been preserved. The predominating view in the East rejected the theory of Original Sin, and while teaching a defilement or weakening of Human Nature, the majority of Greek Fathers did not identify this deterioration with sin, and denied that there is in man any real inborn corruption or sinful bias as a result of Adam's Fall.

In the Latin Church, on the other hand, it is possible to see, even in the third century, traces of the opposite type of thought, which later, owing to the influence of Augustine, became dominant in the West and played so large a part in moulding the views of subsequent generations.

The first Latin Father in whom this tendency is apparent is Tertullian.

§ 15.

Tertullian (A.D. 160–240).

This Latin writer, more than any other writer before Augustine, helped to fix the main lines on which speculation on the subject of Original Sin should proceed in the Western Churches, and his ideas were largely based on the doctrine of Traducianism. This doctrine, which Tertullian derived from the Stoic system of Philosophy, formed an integral part of his theology, and after him it became the recognised psychology in the Latin-speaking world.

Following the chief Stoic teachers, who regarded all existences as having a corporeal nature, Tertullian held that soul is matter. "Everything that is", he says, "is body." [1] This corporeality in his view extends even to God. The soul, therefore, which is made in His image is also material

[1] *De Carne Christi* 11, Omne quod est, corpus est sui generis; nihil est incorporale nisi quod non est.

and possesses the properties of matter. This materialistic view of the soul became the basis of a definite theory as to its origin. The soul, like the body, is propagated and passed on from parent to child. It does not enter the body after birth, but as the child's body is derived from the body of its father, so the child's soul is derived from the soul of its father like a shoot (tradux) from a tree, and is produced simultaneously with the body. From this it follows that, as the body of every man is ultimately derived from Adam's body, so the soul of every man is ultimately derived from Adam's soul and must be regarded as a branch (surculus) of it.

This theory of the origin of the soul led Tertullian to formulate the theory of a hereditary sinful taint. If there be nothing in a continuous process of transmission from a generic unity that is incompatible with the nature of a rational and voluntary essence such as is the soul, then there is nothing in such transmission that is incompatible with the preservation by the soul in each of its individualisations of its spiritual characteristics and qualities. It remains intelligent, rational and voluntary at every point in the line of procreation, and retains its tendencies from one generation to another. Hence, if the soul be received by the child from the parent, the tendency to sin must also be received by the child from the parent, inasmuch as the child shares in all the characteristics of those from whom its human nature is transmitted. The qualities of Adam must thus have been transmitted to all his descendants. The propagation of the soul, therefore, implies the propagation of sin.[1]

It is evident that Tertullian's argument entirely depends upon the correctness of his hypothesis of the propagation of souls. Hence the importance attached by him to the Traducian theory and the earnestness with which he maintained it.

It must be noticed, however, that though Tertullian was the first to formulate the idea of inherited sin and to explain how this corruption of nature might be transmitted, yet it is only the beginnings of Augustinian anthropology which can be traced in the writings of this African Father. In some cases he still speaks of Original Sin in the language

[1] Tradux animae, tradux peccati.

of the Greek theologians. He did not regard our corruption as being so complete that no goodness at all resided in the soul. Indeed, his well-known arguments for the delay of children's baptism rest upon the comparative innocency of infancy.[1] Nor did he altogether deny freedom of will. Though human efficiency is reduced in his writings almost to a minimum, yet he employs language elsewhere which certainly implies the co-operation of man in the process of regeneration.[2]

In conclusion, it must be allowed on all hands that Tertullian with his theory of inherited sin and of the corruption of Human Nature contributed more largely than any other Father to the development of the doctrine of Original Sin which was completed in the fifth century by Augustine.

Cyprian of Carthage and Hilary of Poitiers are the two chief Latin Fathers between Tertullian and Ambrose whose writings might have been expected to contribute to the development of Western theological thought, but as a matter of fact it is found that they contribute little that is new to the doctrine of Original Sin, and in their scattered allusions to the subject they merely reproduce the tradition already established in the West by Tertullian, adopting that Father's conclusions as to the unity of the race with Adam and the existence of an inherited taint, but inclining more to the synergistic theory of the will[3] than did their master.

The last link in the chain of Western tradition connecting Tertullian and Augustine is Ambrose of Milan.

§ 16.

Ambrose (A.D. 374–397).

The writings of this Father show the most distinct development in the doctrine of Original Sin since the days of

[1] *De Bapt.* 18, Quid festinat innocens aetas ad remissionem peccatorum ?

[2] *Ad Uxorem* 21, where he admits that the initiative sometimes comes from man.

[3] Hil. *In Ps.* xix, letter xiv 10, where he says that the persevering in faith is of God, but the origin and commencement of faith is from ourselves. See also *In Ps.* xix, letter xvi 10, where he speaks to the same effect: " It is the part of divine mercy to assist the willing, . . . but the commencement is from ourselves, that God may finish and perfect ".

Tertullian. He speaks of a sinful nature in still more definite terms, regarding sin as a state rather than an act. This depraved state of Human Nature commenced with the Fall, which Ambrose describes as occasioning the loss of the divine image.[1] In fact, it seems that it was from this Father that Augustine derived his doctrine of Original Righteousness, which became the recognised teaching of the Middle Ages.

The unity of the human race with Adam is a special feature in Ambrose's teaching. In discussing Rom. v 12 he says: "Adam existed (fuit) and we all existed in him; Adam perished and all perished in him."[2] This idea apparently prepared the way for the conception of an actual participation in Adam's sin as opposed to the mere imputation of it to Adam's posterity. Augustine seized upon this explanation as a means of vindicating the justice of God, and expressed it in the famous words: "In lumbis Adam fuimus". Men incur the guilt of Adam's sin because men all shared in that sin.

This is a totally different conception from the idea that men share in Adam's sin because he constituted Human Nature and represented the whole race, and that therefore his sin was the sin not of an individual but of Human Nature in general. This latter theory, however, is already apparent in some passages of Ambrose's writings, and it was the view which dominated Christian thought in the Middle Ages.

With regard to the theory of an inborn taint, Ambrose was quoted by Augustine as having held the doctrine of hereditary corruption.[3] This is clearly seen in the following passage: "We all sinned in the first man, and by the succession of nature the succession of guilt was transfused from one to all".[4] Here heredity is distinctly conceived as the method whereby the sinful taint is propagated. It is also to be noticed that Ambrose regards this inborn taint

[1] *Hexaem.* vi 7, Ubi lapsus est, deposuit imaginem coelestis.

[2] *In Luc.* xv 24, Fuit Adam et in illo fuimus omnes; periit Adam et in illo omnes perierunt.

[3] *De Peccato Originali* xli.

[4] *Apol. David* 71, Omnes in primo homine peccavimus et per naturae successionem culpae quoque ab uno in omnes transfusa est successio.

as something separate from sin. The latter is washed away in baptism; the former is not.

When Ambrose deals with the problem of free-will, it is evident that he regards it as being weakened by the Fall, but he does not consider it to be so corrupt that it cannot of its own motion turn to righteousness. He seems generally to adopt the synergistic view of the will, and in this respect he follows the example of his predecessors, though like them he displays a good deal of uncertainty and vacillation in his utterances on the subject. It was left to Augustine to pronounce definitely in favour of the monergistic theory of Grace. That Ambrose himself inclined to the synergistic view is shown by the following passage: "He did not predestinate before He foreknew, but to those whose merit He foreknew He predestinated the rewards of merit".[1] Here the power of the natural will to do right is clearly recognised.

§ 17.

Gradual Growth of the Doctrine of Original Sin in the West.

The foregoing pages indicate that the germinal substance of the Augustinian theory of Sin existed in the century previous to that in which Augustine's principal activity lay, and that the development of the doctrine of Original Sin proceeded systematically in the West but not in the East, in spite of the fact that Origen supplied many of the ideas on which the Augustinian doctrine was built up. The indefiniteness of thought and the mystic conception of the intricate problems connected with Human Nature, which are visible in Irenaeus and Origen, remained a characteristic feature of the Greek attitude towards the whole subject, while the Western mind required a more practical and definite treatment of the problem. Mysticism was rejected in favour of realism. Hence in the West speculation with regard to the Fall and Original Sin proceeded steadily along the lines laid down by Tertullian until it reached a final and systematic form at the hands of Augustine.

The teaching of Augustine with regard to Original Sin is often identified with the *vox totius Ecclesiae*, but the

[1] *De Fide* v 83.

historical survey now concluded shows that this is very far from being the case. The materials out of which he constructed his theory were present in previous writers, though far more in the West than in the East, but the theory itself must be regarded as his own individual contribution, whether for better or for worse, to Christian theology, and it has no greater claim to be received than is derived from his personal authority, which authority may of course be very variously estimated, according to the private opinion of particular theologians. Whether his theories be accepted or rejected, they must stand upon their own merits ; they cannot claim universal ecclesiastical sanction.

CHAPTER III

PELAGIANISM

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CHAPTER III

PELAGIANISM

§ 1.

Early History of Pelagius.

At the close of the fourth century there appeared at Rome a man destined to play one of the leading parts in Church History for the space of nearly thirty years. This was the British monk Pelagius, whose anthropological views gave rise to what was perhaps the most interesting and important controversy which the Christian world had yet witnessed. The issues raised by him, namely, the problem of free-will, the nature of sin, the question of inherited corruption, and the value of external help to enable man to do right, must compel attention in every age, independently of all theological discussion, and they concern the twentieth century no less than they concerned the fifth, dealing, as they do, with the radical characteristics of Human Nature.

About the exact birthplace of Pelagius there is considerable uncertainty. The traditional account which says that he came from Wales or Ireland,[1] and that his name was originally Morgan,[2] need not for our present purpose be criticised. Augustine calls him more than once a British monk. Suffice it to say that, to whatever race he may have belonged, he was certainly a native of our islands, which had for some time been the home of a small branch of the Catholic Church.

His personal views, however, which were later elaborated and drawn up into a system not so much by himself as by his follower, Julian of Eclanum, Pelagius derived not

[1] Jerome, *Pref. Bk. III in Ierem.*, says: "Habet progeniem Scoticae gentis de Britannorum vicinia". The Scots, of course, inhabited Ireland at this time, not Scotland, which was the home of the Picts.

[2] I.c. Marigena, of which the grecised form is Πελάγιος.

from Britain but from Theodore of Mopsuestia, the spiritual father of Nestorius, and also from Rufinus the Syrian,[1] not, it would seem, the famous Rufinus of Aquileia, but one whom Caelestius describes as "the holy priest Rufinus who dwelt at Rome with the holy Pammachius".[2] But though Pelagius agreed with Theodore in his particular view of sin, yet he did not, like Theodore, depart in the least from the orthodox Christology of the day. He was not, therefore, aware that he was incurring the charge of heresy. Again and again he declared that his anthropological views were outside the domain of dogma.[3] It is important in our estimate of Pelagius to bear this in mind, especially since he was a man of upright life and serious moral purpose. Pelagius for many reasons cannot fail to excite our sympathy, alike for the earnestness with which he attacked moral laxity as for the controversial issues which he evoked and for the service which he thereby rendered to theology. That he held a one-sided and exaggerated conception of free-will cannot be denied: that his atomistic theory of sin is profoundly unsatisfactory is of course true; but in view of modern theories it may justifiably be maintained that the doctrine of Pelagius is not by any means so erroneous as was formerly supposed, nor that of Augustine so identified with orthodoxy.

§ 2.

Pelagius in Rome. His Moral Teaching.

But before the views known as Pelagian can be examined and discussed, a brief account of the controversy is necessary, in order to show how these views gradually developed. It will thus be seen that the exaggerations into which Pelagius occasionally fell were the result of the pressure brought to bear upon him by his adversaries, and were not so much his original views as positions forced upon him in debate, and were resorted to in order that due emphasis

[1] See Marius Mercator, *Commonit. adv. Pel. et Cael.*

[2] Said by Caelestius at the Council of inquiry at Carthage, as the minutes report, when Paulinus requested him to mention any persons who held his views.

[3] See Aug. *De Gestis Pel.* Anathematizo quasi stultos, non quasi haereticos, siquidem non est dogma.

might be laid upon, and recognition gained for, those aspects of Divine Truth which he regarded as of paramount importance to mankind.

From 401–9 the scene of Pelagius's activity was the Imperial city, where he met Caelestius, who became so closely connected with him in the subsequent development of his doctrine. Pelagius began his teaching simply as a moral reformer. The Church at Rome at the beginning of the fifth century was notoriously luxurious and corrupt. Pelagius was shocked upon his arrival to find a fatal indifference amongst the majority of Roman Christians as to true inward morality, and he immediately commenced to preach the need of strict uprightness of character. Attempts at self-exoneration on the plea that it was so difficult to do right and that poor human nature was too weak to resist the manifold temptations that beset daily life, Pelagius regarded as an ignoble form of pagan fatalism and as a mere languid pretext for indolence. "Away with such despicable excuses", he would say. "It is not the strength that you lack, but the will. Up, rouse yourselves. You could do better if you would. God has given you a nature that enables you to choose the right. You can avoid sinning if you wish. If you sin, it is not because you are under any compulsion to sin, but because of your misuse of your free-will. Besides, it must be remembered that to commit sin and then to lay the blame on the weakness of your nature is really to lay the blame on God, who gave men this nature. God commands nothing impossible. It is sheer profanity to say that God has laid certain duties upon us and at the same time has given us a nature incapable of performing them." [1] Men are only too ready to excuse their slackness by professing inability and by fancying that they are under a kind of fate.

Thus Pelagius began with the firm conviction that men's wills needed energising, that they must at all costs be roused from their self-complacent inaction, and that they underrated, whether intentionally or unintentionally, their own power of moral initiative.

[1] See Pelag. *Ep. ad. Demetr.* Ne tanto remissior sit ad virtutem animus ac tardior, quanto minus se posse credat et dum quod inesse sibi ignorat id se existimet non habere.

While Pelagius was still at Rome, a bishop quoted in his hearing the prayer recorded in the *Confessions* of Augustine: "Give what thou commandest and command what thou willest".[1] This distressed Pelagius, who opposed it vehemently, as Augustine himself tells us.[2] We can readily believe that Pelagius's attitude was due to the fact that he feared the result of such words on the morally indolent. "Give the power!" we can imagine him saying; "why, you *have* the power. Is God likely to save you without any effort on your part? Surely not. You must yourselves wrestle and strive, working out your own salvation, fighting against apathy, labouring on your own behalf, taking the kingdom of heaven by force. God only helps those who help themselves."

This was the sum and substance of Pelagius's early teaching. With him practice was always the principal thing. He would never have anything to do with theory. His sole aim was to deprive an inert and worldly Christendom of the excuse that it was physically impossible to keep God's commands. Caelestius, on the other hand, though he agreed to a large extent with his master, attacked Original Sin (tradux peccati) yet more vigorously, and, calling in the use of logic, developed something more like an ethical system to combat the views which he abhorred. But Pelagius merely tried to preach a practical Christianity, avoiding as far as he could theological polemics. The controversy into which he was drawn was none of his own seeking, and he was only persuaded to enter the arena with Augustine by his earnest conviction that true spiritual reformation lay along the lines laid down by himself. At the same time it is important to observe that Julian of Eclanum, who eventually tried to develop Pelagianism into a definite system, really added nothing material to the views of Pelagius.

§ 3.

In Africa and Palestine. Synod of Carthage.

From Rome Pelagius and Caelestius went to Hippo Regius and to Carthage, hoping to see there the famous

[1] Da quod iubes et iube quod vis. [2] Aug. *De Dono Persev.* 53.

Augustine. This was in 409, the year before that in which Rome was taken by Alaric. Augustine had already heard several people speak of strange teaching on the part of Pelagius respecting infant baptism, to the effect that it was not administered with a view to remission of sin,[1] but he was too occupied with the Donatist controversy to give much heed to two strangers who, though propounding novelties, were as yet comparatively unknown and men of little importance. The result was that Augustine and Pelagius did not meet,[2] and the latter quitted Africa in 411 for Palestine,[3] leaving Caelestius at Carthage, where he endeavoured to gain admission to the priesthood. This, however, was refused, and he was charged, at a Synod held at Carthage in 412, with holding heretical views. The grounds of accusation brought against Caelestius were as follows: "He taught that Adam was created mortal and would have died whether he had sinned or not; that Adam's sin injured only himself and not the whole human race; that infants are at birth in the same condition as that in which Adam was before the Fall; that men do not die on account of Adam's death or fall, nor will they rise again through the Resurrection of Christ; that the Law enables men to reach heaven no less than does the Gospel; that even before the advent of our Lord there were men who lived without sin; and that men can now live without sin and can easily keep God's commandments if they will".[4] These charges against Caelestius were formally brought[5] before Aurelius, Bishop of Carthage, by Paulinus, a deacon of Milan, afterwards the biographer of S. Ambrose, and in spite of Caelestius' vigorous defence and his assertion that many other presbyters of the Catholic Church held the same opinions, he was excommunicated. We learn from Marius Mercator that at first

[1] See Aug. *De Peccat. Mer.* iii 12. Infantes baptizantur non in remissionem peccatorum, sed ut sanctificentur in Christo.

[2] Aug. *De Gestis Pelagii* 46.

[3] Harnack thinks that this early departure was really due to Pelagius's discovery that his views were not acceptable in Africa, and to his anxiety to avoid causing theological strife (*Hist. of Dogma*, Eng. Trans. v p. 175).

[4] See Marius Mercator, *Commonit. adv. Pel. et Cael.*, who copied his account from the records of the Carthaginian Council, and cp. Aug. *De Gest. Pel.*, where a similar account is given.

[5] Aug. *De Pecc. Orig.* 2.

Caelestius thought of appealing from this verdict to the Bishop of Rome, but that he eventually changed his mind and departed to Ephesus, where he became presbyter, and that he went from there to Constantinople.

Meanwhile Pelagianism continued to spread at Carthage. The ball of controversy on such a subject as free-will, once set rolling, was not easy to stop. The Pelagians interpreted the text, Rom. v 12, "By one man sin entered into the world", as meaning that Adam sinned by an act of free choice and set a bad example to others—nothing more. They maintained that the doctrine of Original Sin, which declares that man inherits some ingrained moral flaw, taint or disease, was nothing but a superstitious fancy, and they argued that if Adam's sin morally damaged the whole human race, then Christ's death must have had the opposite effect on all believers in Him. Thus they denied the hereditary corruption of Human Nature, and they claimed support for their view in the authority of the Eastern Churches, whose tendency had always been to lay stress on the power of the human will. Indeed, they even went so far as to fling back the charge of innovation, declaring that the views of Augustine expressed in a sermon on the text, John iii 3, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God", were really a departure from primitive orthodoxy. In this sermon Augustine accused the Pelagians of holding that infants were baptised, not because they needed any remission of the guilt of sin, but in order that they might enter into the kingdom of God, and thereby obtain salvation and eternal life. It is obvious that the rite of infant baptism could not fail to form a prominent subject in a controversy dealing with the question of Original Sin. At this point Augustine plunged in earnest into the controversy and wrote his first real anti-Pelagian work, *On the Deserts and Remission of Sins*,[1] in three books, in which he maintained that baptism was administered for the remission of sins in the case of adults, and that therefore, unless the baptism of infants was a farce, they must necessarily partake in

[1] The full title of this treatise is *De Peccatorum Meritis et Remissione et De Baptismo Parvulorum*. The subject of Original Sin is discussed in the third book.

the same privilege also. Turning to the critical passage, Rom. v 12, he denied that it could be interpreted as referring to mere imitation of Adam's sin, but asserted that it implied a real connexion between Adam's nature and ours, involving an inherited tendency to evil antecedently to and independently of any personal sin on our part. This he described as " originale peccatum ", that is, sin born in a man and derived from his parents. No orthodox writers, he declared, had ever denied Original Sin. Unfortunately, he does not make the distinction between Original Sin and Actual Sin sufficiently definite. He traces all sin to the Fall of Adam. Its propagation in the race is due to the possession of a corrupt nature inherited from Adam, which has left man incapable of any movement towards salvation apart from the help of God's Spirit. This condition is not only the cause of all sin but is itself sinful, exposing all men to the wrath of God. Hence Augustine maintained that the only remedy for the taint of Original Sin is Divine Grace.

§ 4.

Controversy on Grace.

The progress of the controversy now leads the combatants to define still further their respective views on the subject of Grace. Two young men, Timasius and James, sent to Augustine a work *On Nature,* written by Pelagius in Palestine, in which he tried to give a dialectical proof of his anthropological views, and they asked for an expression of opinion upon it. Augustine replied with the treatise *On Nature and Grace,*[1] which was written in 415. In this he gives us many extracts from the work in question, from which we learn that Pelagius affirmed the complete sufficiency of Human Nature for the pursuit of virtue and for uprightness of life. Sin, he declared, is negative rather than positive, a lack rather than an entity. Consequently he denied the corruption of the human race, and maintained that man could by the Grace of God live without sin, in proof of which he referred to Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses and other good men in the Old Testament.

[1] *De Natura et Gratia.*

But what did Pelagius mean by "the Grace of God"? At first Augustine, on seeing the phrase, thought that Pelagius was becoming sound on this point and was beginning to admit the need of Divine Grace, but on further examination he discovered, as he tells us, that Pelagius meant nothing more than the natural endowment of free-will, itself the gift of God, the affirmation of which, says Augustine, means nothing at all. It is true that the words of Pelagius are slightly ambiguous, but a certain amount of ambiguity in this respect is not only excusable but almost unavoidable. In a sense nature may be regarded as Grace—free-will itself, as well as all other natural endowments and powers, being gifts of God; while on the other hand Grace must to some degree be identified with nature, since, when bestowed, it becomes a power in us and belonging to us as human beings, acting through our natural faculties—the mind, the conscience and the heart. In this sense, therefore, the Pelagians were not wrong when they declared that 'nature' was able to fulfil the law.[1]

But without casting any aspersions on the fairness of Augustine in recording the views of his opponent, it would be very unjust to maintain that Pelagius refused to recognise any gift of Divine assistance over and above the endowments of the moral nature as it came from the Creator's hand. In reply to continual inquiries as to whether he believed in 'Grace', he declared that he most certainly did; that the promulgation of the Mosaic Law assisted the voice of conscience by the stimulus of oral instruction, and that the ministry of Christ, besides intensifying that stimulus, added the Grace afforded by a perfect pattern. The innate discernment between right and wrong, the preaching of the Divine Will, the remission of sins and the model of Christ's conduct, were all embraced by Pelagius in his extended interpretation of Grace. Pelagius also admitted that a higher Grace than any of these was required, namely, the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, which brought its inward enlightenment and strength not only to the mind but to the heart, by the call not of law but of love. He considered,

[1] Pel. *De Gratia Christi* 5. Posse in natura, velle in arbitrio, esse in effectu locamus.

however, insistence overmuch upon this point to be inadvisable, and was rather inclined to keep it in the background as inimical to the pursuit of practical and adequate motives to righteous action, and as encouraging confidence in a salvation bestowed without personal effort. Consequently he thought it a duty to deny the necessity of particular spiritual Grace in the observance of the Divine Law and in the practice of virtue.

§ 5.

Synods held at Jerusalem and Diospolis acquit Pelagius of Heresy. Wide View of Grace taken in the East.

It has already been said that Pelagius had gone to Palestine, and this country now becomes for a time the scene of the controversy. Pelagius had still no wish to enter the theological lists as a combatant, but he felt at this point that, if he strove at all, it must be for some positive issue and not merely for the negative result for which Caelestius fought, namely, the denial of Original Sin. Accordingly, he now put forward as his main contention the possibility of sinlessness in man.[1] This was unfortunate, because he was adopting a view that was directly opposed to the whole experience of the human race. John Wesley, indeed, went so far as to say that the real heresy of Pelagius lay in this point, namely, in holding that Christians may by the Grace of God go on to perfection.[2] Pelagius would doubtless have served his cause better had he confined his teaching to the practical value of the doctrine of free-will. On his arrival in Palestine he had established friendly relations with Jerome, who was then in Bethlehem, but this intimacy did not last long. It ended as soon as Jerome heard from Augustine his views of the position taken up by Pelagius, upon which Jerome wrote his letter against Pelagius to a certain Ctesiphon. attacking the theory of sinlessness and maintaining that according to Scripture no man had ever lived 'without sin'. Jerome's hostility to Pelagius was not lessened by the fact that the British monk found a friend in John, Bishop of Jerusalem, with whom Jerome had already come into conflict. Pelagius, moreover, found an active and zealous

[1] Pel. *Capitula*; Jerome *Ep. ad Ctesiphontem* (Ep. 133).
[2] Wesley's *Works* vi 328, ed. 1829.

opponent in Orosius, a Spanish monk who now appeared on the scene in Palestine. He had been sent by Augustine to impeach him, and he succeeded in getting Bishop John to convene a Synod at Jerusalem in 415 to investigate the matter. At this Synod Pelagius admitted that he taught that man can be without sin and can keep the commandments of God if he will, but he was acquitted by John on the grounds that he did not altogether deny Divine Grace.

Orosius, disappointed with this result, got Pelagius cited in December of the same year to appear before another Synod held at Diospolis [1] under Eulogius of Caesarea. Here he did not, indeed, deny the views respecting nature and Grace with which he was charged, but he was able to explain them in such a way as to satisfy his judges. He was then asked to disown the statements of Caelestius which had been already condemned at the Council of Carthage, to which he replied that the statements were not his and that therefore he was not bound to answer for them.[2] On being further desired to anathematise the holders of these opinions, he at length reluctantly condemned them, but remarked that he regarded them not as heretics but as fools.[3] The Synod, little versed in Western questions and anxious to act with moderation, acquitted him.[4] This acquittal, Augustine asserts, being obtained on false pretences, was worthless.[5] The truth is that Pelagius detested all forms of theological strife, and under the conviction that controversy could only injure the cause of practical Christianity, he allowed it to be thought that he repudiated views which, if not actually held by him, were nevertheless the logical outcome of his position.

One conclusion may be drawn from the twofold acquittal of Pelagius in Palestine, and that is that the East was not desirous of defining the precise limits and extent of free-will and Grace, provided it was admitted that both factors play their part in effecting moral uprightness in man. The doctrine of Grace as formulated by Augustine was never adopted by the Eastern Church. The characteristic phrase

[1] For an account of this Synod see Aug. *De Gestis Pelagii* 2.
[2] Ib. 30. [3] Ib. 18.
[4] Jerome, Ep. cxliii, calls it a "miserable Synod".
[5] Aug. *De Gestis Pel.* 45. Cf. also *De Pecc. Orig.*

of Pelagius, "non est dogma", used by him at the Synod of Diospolis, would find a ready echo in the minds of the Greeks, who have always been unwilling to extend the dogmatic sphere and have allowed considerable latitude of view with regard to sin, grace and justification, provided the actual doctrine implied therein be adhered to.

§ 6.

Synods of Carthage and Milevum. "Libellus" denying Original Sin presented to Zosimus. Condemnation of Pelagianism.

The scene now shifts once more to the West. Pelagius, wishing to conciliate Augustine and to influence him in his favour, wrote him a letter[1] mentioning the fact that the Eastern bishops had approved of his assertion that man could easily[2] live without sin and giving his own account of the proceedings. Elated at his acquittal, he forthwith published a work in four books *On Free-will*,[3] stating more definitely than hitherto his views on this subject, which elicited a reply from Augustine in two tractates *On the Grace of Christ*"[4] and *On Original Sin*.[5] Meanwhile Orosius returned to Carthage in 416, bringing with him information about the Synods in Palestine, contained in letters to the African Church from the chief accusers of Pelagius. Synods were held at Carthage and Milevum to consider the report, and they refused to acquiesce in what had taken place, but repeated their condemnation of 412. A synodal letter, accompanied by Pelagius's book and Augustine's reply, was sent to Innocent of Rome, with the request that he would forthwith condemn Pelagius on the ground that he recognised no other grace than the nature with which God had originally endowed mankind. This was rapidly followed by other and still more insistent letters, referring to the condemnation of Caelestius five years before. Innocent, possibly flattered that such importance was assigned by the North African Church to the verdict of the Roman See, replied by condemning Pelagius. This was in January 417, only two

[1] Aug. *De Gestis Pel.* 1, 54, 57.

[2] As a matter of fact there was no mention of the word 'easily' at the Synod.

[3] *De Libero Arbitrio.*

[4] *De Gratia Christi.*

[5] *De Peccato Originali.*

months before his death. Pelagius now sent to Rome an elaborate vindication of himself, in which he declared that, though he laid the greatest stress on free-will, yet at the same time he held that man always stands in need of the aid of God. This letter was addressed to Innocent, but was delivered to his successor Zosimus, who, being himself a Greek, and therefore more in sympathy with the Eastern than the Western point of view, acquitted Pelagius.

Hereupon Caelestius, thinking the opportunity a favourable one, came to Rome and laid before Zosimus his views on Original Sin, hoping to gain from so complaisant a Pope a verdict that would rehabilitate him in the eyes of the world and secure for his theory recognition as part of the catholic and orthodox faith. In the "Libellus"[1] which he presented to Zosimus he denied absolutely the existence of Original Sin in the sense of hereditary moral corruption. He admitted that infants ought to be and are baptised for the remission of sins, inasmuch as our Lord declared that the kingdom of heaven can be conferred upon none save the baptised, but he repudiated the doctrine of transmission of sin, that is, sin propagated by generation, as being non-catholic. Sin, he said, is not born with a man, and is a fault not of the nature but of the will. To maintain otherwise would be to impute evil to the Creator.

Thus Caelestius maintained that sin was something committed by man after birth and was a personal act of the will, independent of any antecedent evil propensity. The only moral corruption possible, according to this view, is the result of repeated sin and is therefore only to be found in adults.

After an examination of Caelestius, held in the basilica

[1] See Aug. *De Pecc. Orig.* 5 foll., where the appended quotation from the libellus is found: Infantes debere baptizari in remissionem peccatorum secundum regulam universalis ecclesiae et secundum evangelii sententiam confitemur, quia dominus statuit regnum coelorum non nisi baptizatis conferri; quod, quia vires naturae non habent, conferri necesse est per gratiae libertatem. In remissionem peccatorum baptizandos infantes non idcirco diximus ut peccatum ex traduce firmare videamur, quod longe a catholico sensu alienum est, quia peccatum non cum homine nascitur, quod postmodo exercetur ab homine, quia non naturae delictum, sed voluntatis esse demonstratur. Et illud ergo confiteri congruum, ne diversa baptismatis genera facere videamur, et hoc praemunire necessarium est, ne per mysterii occasionem ad creatoris injuriam malum antequam fiat ab homine, tradi dicatur homini per naturam.

of S. Clement, Zosimus declared Caelestius' belief to be perfectly sound (absoluta fide), and he communicated this decision to the African bishops, telling them that if they wished to question it they must come to Rome within two months and make their complaint in person.

The Carthaginians, highly indignant at this, considered that the cause of orthodoxy was imperilled, and held another Synod, at which it was resolved to adhere to the excommunication of Pelagius and Caelestius until they acknowledged that man is aided by God's Grace not only to know but also to do his duty in everything, so that without it he can have no true piety in thought or word or deed. They then appealed to Zosimus again for a reconsideration of the matter, but on receipt of a vague and unsatisfactory reply, they convened a great African Council [1] at which more than two hundred bishops were present. The result of this Council was a unanimous and emphatic condemnation of Pelagius in nine canons, followed by an appeal, not to the Pope, but to the civil power to enforce it. The Emperors Honorius and Theodosius decided to uphold the verdict of the Africans and pronounced sentence of banishment and confiscation against Pelagius and Caelestius. This happened on April 30, 418.[2] The vacillating Zosimus now yielded to the pressure, and, jealous of his authority, he immediately issued a circular letter, known as his Tractoria, censuring the tenets of Pelagius and Caelestius. This was endorsed by all the bishops to whom it was sent, with the exception of eighteen, chief of whom was the distinguished young bishop Julian of Eclanum.

§ 7.

Julian of Eclànum and his Controversy with Augustine.

This able man, whose controversy with Augustine marks the closing stage and final defeat of Pelagianism, took up his pen in behalf of the failing cause, writing two letters to the Pope and appealing to Honorius for a new hearing before a General Council. Unsuccessful in this, he repeatedly endeavoured to obtain a reversal of the Roman decisions

[1] For the proceedings of this Council see Mansi, *Cons.* iii p. 810 foll.
[2] For this edict see Aug. *Works*, Benedictine Ed., vol. x, Appendix p. 195.

and applied for recognition of his orthodoxy at Constantinople, Ephesus, Thessalonica and elsewhere. But his exertions were all in vain. Ecclesiastical judgments and edicts of the secular power were launched against those holding Pelagian views.[1] Nothing daunted by failure, Julian became the warmest and most zealous defender that Pelagius ever had; but it was too late. The movement had received a crushing blow and was soon suppressed. Julian, however, continued to press Augustine very hard and compelled him to work out his theories to their logical conclusion. His *magnum opus* in eight books was answered by Augustine in a work consisting of six books,[2] on which he was still engaged when he died. From this unfinished work we can gather a clear idea of Julian's chief arguments, for Augustine answers his treatise chapter by chapter and point by point. The doctrine of inherent sinfulness in man, Julian argued, impugned the original goodness of man's nature and God's creation. The sinfulness of the Old Testament saints should not be denied. He laid great stress on free-will and on the moral responsibility of the individual, denouncing the theory of irresistible Grace as doing a wrong to Divine Justice. He insisted on the necessity of holding that all sins are forgiven at baptism, and repudiated the notion that unconscious infants are condemned for the sin of Adam as being an outrage on the equity of God. Finally, he maintained that the Augustinian system represented marriage, although a divine institution, as necessarily evil and sinful. In fact, he even went so far as to declare that Augustinianism was a revived form of Manichaeism, and boldly maintained that the Roman Church in supporting Augustine was patronising a fatalistic error which it would in time have cause to regret. Though we cannot approve of Julian's methods and his abusive polemical invective, we are compelled to admit that there is a considerable element of truth in his contentions and that his prophecy was to a large extent justified. Nor can we blame him for his firm belief in man's capacity for goodness and for his courageous insistence on the need for clearness of thought in dealing with matters of religion

[1] Marius Mercator, *Common.* 1, 3 and also Aug. Ep. 201.
[2] Aug. *Opus imperfectum contra Julianum.*

and morality. To Julian of Eclanum we are indebted fo an attempt to develop the anthropological views scattere through the writings of Pelagius and Caelestius into a forma scheme, and, as Harnack says, "to elevate their mode o thought into a Stoic Christian system." [1]

The later history of Pelagius is lost in obscurity. H is said to have died in extreme old age in Palestine. No is anything known with certainty as to the end of Caelestiu and Julian. Pelagianism was condemned by the Genera Council of Ephesus in 431, though its holders never formed themselves into a sect separate from the Church. It wa also condemned again at the Council held at Arausio (Orange in 529 in twenty-five canons, which, owing to their modera tion, have been generally accepted in the past and came to be regarded as the most important bulwark against Pelagianism.

§ 8.

The Views of Pelagius examined and criticised.

From the foregoing survey of the history of the Pelagian controversy we turn to an examination of the actual views of Pelagius and his adherents. For the purpose of the present inquiry these views may conveniently be set forth and criticised in the following order: Free-will, Sin, and Grace. Other points were raised during the progress of the controversy, but these were for the most part side issues. These three questions, which are closely connected with each other, embrace all the leading characteristics and the special anthropological views of the Pelagian movement.

§ 9

Pelagius on Free-will. Two Weaknesses of his View discussed.

The most fundamental question between Pelagius and his opponents related to the idea of free-will. Pelagius maintained the full and unimpaired freedom of the will. By this he meant an absolute equipoise of moral choice which enables a man at any time, whatever his previous

[1] *Hist. of Dogma* (Eng. Trans.) vol. v p. 189.

history may have been, to choose between good and evil. Adam, he declared, was created with free-will and sinned through free-will.[1] As far as the will is concerned, all men are in exactly the same position as Adam was before the Fall.[2] All men have the capacity for good and evil.[3] Whether they choose the right or wrong course depends entirely on the use they make of their free-will. Sin is not the fault of man's nature but of his will.[4] When two courses of action lie before an individual, he feels in himself and knows that he has the ability to choose either or to reject either. If he chooses the wrong course, he does it with his eyes open. He does it without any compulsion.[5] He does it, although he has the power to refuse to do it.[6] This is simply due to a misuse of his free-will.

Weakness of character does not mean inability to do right.[7] It does not excuse any lapse into sin. Where such weakness exists or is thought to exist, there is all the more need for a special exercise of the will. It is always in man's power to resist and overcome a disinclination to do better. An effort, of course, is required, but it is an effort that ought to be made and can be made. Weakness is no excuse for moral indolence, nor does the fact that the flesh is frail mean that it is impossible to fulfil the commandments of God. To lay the blame on nature is to wrong its Author,[8] who would never have imposed upon us obligations which we were unable to perform.

Accordingly Pelagius distinguished in Human Nature three stages of moral progress: the power, the wish and the attainment (posse, velle, esse).[9] The power he placed in nature, the wish in free-will, and the attainment in deed. Only the first of these did Pelagius regard as the gift of God; the other two he regarded as being under the complete control of man. The fact that we *can* do right comes from

[1] Aug. *Op. Imperf.* vi 23.
[2] Pelag. apud Aug. *De Pecc. Orig.* 14.
[3] Libertas utriusque partis. See Pelag. apud Aug. *De Pecc. Orig.* 14.
[4] Aug. *De Pecc. Orig.* 5.
[5] Aug. *Op. Imperf.* v. Voluntas est nihil aliud quam motus animi cogente nullo.
[6] Ib. i 44, v 28, etc. Caeles. apud Aug. *De Perfect.* 1.
[7] Pelag. *Ep. ad Demetr.*
[8] Ib.
[9] Pel. *De Libero Arbitrio* (apud Aug. *De Gratia Christi* 4).

God, who gave us a nature capable of virtuous acts and gives us, moreover, manifold helps and incitements to aid us in performing them ; but whether we actually *do* them or not depends upon ourselves, on the use we make of our natural endowments, our power, our will, our knowledge of good and evil.

Such is the Pelagian view of free-will. As a philosophy of Human Nature it has its weaknesses, but its weaknesses are not such as to justify its wholesale condemnation. The defects of the theory are two in number. First, it is unsound in denying any antecedent moral depravity. It regards each human being as coming into the world furnished with moral faculties unfettered and unbiased towards either good or evil. This contradicts the plainest verdict of human experience, which bears witness to an infirmity of nature, called in theological language concupiscence, which accompanies the will from the outset. Whatever be the origin of this tendency, the fact of it is undeniable. In what other way is it possible to account for the universality of sin ? Even those who under the influence of modern thought hold very altered views as to the Fall of man and the propagation of sin admit an inherent imperfection in the will. Ideal free-will is theoretically able to do anything, but actual free-will is biased to evil. Pelagius laid more weight on the abstract and theoretical freedom of the will than it would bear. He left out the desires, which are of the nature of man.

Secondly, it is unsound as leaving out of sight the power of sin as a habit and man's inability, in spite of formal freedom, to do the things that he would. Sin does not after being committed pass away and leave no trace upon the character. The will is weakened by each successive lapse. A man who is addicted to a bad habit may be conscious of the power to avoid a repetition of it and may think that he can avoid it, but when face to face with temptation he finds that the influence of habit undermines his imagined power and unnerves his will. In fact, the impulse that drives him to do wrong becomes stronger than the impulse that urges him to do right. This is where the need of external help is felt and where Grace becomes indispensable. In overlooking this

fact and in pressing unlimited freedom of will, Pelagius missed one portion of the complete truth. Thus he is found, as Bright says,[1] to have halved, and in so far to have corrupted, the Gospel of Christ, though the same charge might fairly be brought against his opponent.

These two weaknesses, however detrimental to Pelagius's teaching regarded as a scientific theory, are not so serious when we consider it merely as a practical doctrine for the guidance of life, nor should his whole conception of free-will be condemned as impossible and erroneous because of the constraints and limitations to which free-will is subject. It is true, as has already been remarked, that Pelagius laid undue stress on one aspect of a great truth, but exaggeration of the importance of a fact does not invalidate the fact. Pelagius's view of free-will may have been one-sided and partial, but it was not radically unsound, for there is no doubt that there is much truth in the view of free-will held by him. All experience teaches this. Every man is conscious of free-will and feels that he has the power of doing right and of abstaining from wrong on each occasion. The sense of freedom of choice is part and parcel of Human Nature. Indeed, the very sense of sin and the consciousness of guilt can only arise from the inward conviction that wrong-doing could have been avoided. However limited, in actual experience, may be the power to carry out a good resolution or to perform a deed of more than usual difficulty which goes beyond the standard of ordinary practice, yet to deny freedom of action is a doctrine fatal to Human Nature, which only too often lacks confidence in its power to do the thing that is right. Overstatement in emphasising this factor is certainly better than understatement, as encouraging men to put forth effort and as giving them an additional incentive to a moral life by holding before them the abstract possibility of perfection, however slight and remote this possibility may be.

Then, again, the Pelagian view of free-will brings into prominence an essentially important point, the personal responsibility of the individual. Owing to the possession of free-will, each man is responsible for every lapse into sin,

[1] *Age of the Fathers* vol. ii p. 164.

and is therefore to be accounted guilty. Inasmuch as all men have sufficient moral illumination to enable them to discern between right and wrong, and also power to choose freely between conflicting motives, no minimising or shelving of personal responsibility is possible. This is a thing that Augustine unfortunately did not see, and the result was that his system, failing to emphasise the inalienable rights and responsibilities of the individual, could never be a real power in moral reform nor rouse men to the active pursuit of virtue. Pelagius, therefore, in vigorously safeguarding human responsibility, grasped a truth in regard to the doctrine of Human Nature which can never be ignored with impunity.

§ 10.

PELAGIUS ON ORIGINAL SIN. HIS EXPLANATION OF THIS AS EXAMPLE ONLY. HIS DENIAL OF THE FALL OF ADAM, OF IMPUTATION OF GUILT, AND OF MAN'S PARTICIPATION IN ADAM'S SIN. PELAGIUS ON ACTUAL SIN.

Closely connected with the question of free-will is the problem of Original Sin and of the corruption of Human Nature. The theory which Augustine held is that the universality of sin is to be traced to the effects of a Fall from an original state of innocence and uprightness which took place at the commencement of history, and that the result of this Fall is a corruption of our nature, causing every man born into the world to be in an abnormal moral state from his birth. He held that this universal taint and bias in the direction of evil is handed on from parents to children by natural generation and is the cause of all sin in man, and that because of our participation in this hereditary sinfulness we are all in a state which is offensive to God and is deserving of His wrath and punishment.

This theory Pelagius vigorously opposed, maintaining that Adam's sin did not affect his posterity otherwise than by the evil example it afforded.[1] Original Sin in the sense of hereditary moral corruption he absolutely denied. He admitted that there is a deterioration[2] of the race which is caused through the custom of sinning, even as an individual becomes worse through indulgence in sinful habits, and does

[1] Pelag. apud Aug. *De Pecc. Orig.* 11–16.
[2] Pelag. *Ep. ad Demetr.*

not deny that this deterioration becomes in effect a second nature, requiring occasional interpositions of the Divine mercy by means of revelation and otherwise.[1] But sin propagated by generation (peccatum ex traduce) he utterly repudiated. How could sin, he asked, be transmitted from father to son ? It is difficult to believe that moral tendencies can be reproduced by the natural operations of begetting and giving birth, as if they were physical characteristics.[2] Besides, even if such reproduction were possible, it surely would not be the case with Christian parents. Indeed, it might equally well be argued that such persons would transmit their Christianity. Again, if sin be propagated through marriage, then marriage is itself sinful and is to be condemned. This point formed the subject of much controversy between Julian and Augustine.[3] Julian maintained that Augustine's teaching desecrated marriage, and he drove Augustine to draw a distinction between marriage itself and sexual desire. This, of course, was purely artificial, and elsewhere Augustine, while admitting the honourableness of marriage, was led to regard celibacy as an intrinsically higher state. Finally, Pelagius regarded the propagation of sin as implying the procreation of souls. This is the Traducianist theory, condemned alike by philosophy and metaphysics, which Pelagius rejected and which Julian accused Augustine of holding.[4] Pelagius held a form of Creatianism which is not entirely inconsistent with the observed facts of experience and modern philosophy.[5]

But the denial of Original Sin carried Pelagius a step farther, and he found himself inevitably led to a rejection of the traditional doctrine of the Fall,[6] in so far as it involved the admission of an inherited corruption of Human Nature. It may be doubted whether Pelagius in the first instance

[1] Pelag. *Ep. ad Demetr.* 8.

[2] Aug. *Op. Imperf.* vi 9. Amentissimum est arbitrii negotium seminibus inmixtum putare. Also ib. iii, 11. Injustum est ut reatus per semina traderetur.

[3] Ib. v and *Contra Jul.* v.

[4] Ib. i 6. It is, however, doubtful whether Julian had real justification for the charge, though, as has been seen, Tertullian was an ardent Traducianist.

[5] See Lotze, *Outlines of Psychology* 81.

[6] Pelag. apud Aug. *De Nat. et Gratia.*

meant to attack this doctrine,[1] but his contention that infants before the exercise of the will are perfectly good and untainted was in itself a denial of the Fall, and therefore drove him, whatever his first intention, to an express rejection of that doctrine. Adam's so-called Fall, he said, was an act of sin through free-will, and every sin now is equally an act of sin through free-will. Children are, before they sin, in the same unfallen state as Adam was before he sinned. Moreover, death is not the result of Adam's lapse and the punishment of sin, but a natural necessity. Adam was originally created mortal and did not differ in any respect from ourselves. If all men died through Adam's death, then all men would necessarily rise again through the Resurrection of Christ.

This leads to the next point, the denial of the imputation of guilt. If sin is not transmitted, much less is guilt transmitted. The first doctrine is Manichaean, but the second is blasphemous. The imputation of guilt is inconsistent with equity and is a slur on the justice of God. "God, who is willing", said Pelagius, "to remit a man's own sins, is not likely to impute to him those of others for which he is not responsible." Augustine himself felt this difficulty, and endeavoured to explain it by representing all mankind as having existed in Adam and therefore as having sinned with him and as having been partakers of his act.[2] This doctrine of participation in Adam's sin was equally rejected by Pelagius, not only as a natural consequence of his denial of Original Sin, but also on the ground of the absurdity of supposing man to sin before he was born.

The view of Pelagius with regard to Original Sin having been considered, it is time now to consider his attitude towards actual sin. Evil, Pelagius maintained, is no element or body, no positive entity, otherwise we should be compelled to hold a Manichaean dualism or else to say that God was the author of evil. Sin he held to be a momentary determination of the will, a voluntary act for which the individual is on each separate occasion entirely responsible

[1] His hesitation at the Synod of Diospolis to reject the Fall was due less to deceit than to unwillingness to deny recognised dogma.

[2] Aug. *Op. Imperf.* i 48, In lumbis Adam fuimus. See also i 57, ii 163, iii 25, etc.

and over which he has complete control. Consequently he denied that sin was in any sense necessary. The necessity of sin is a logical outcome of the doctrine of the Fall and of the inherited corruption of nature. This Pelagius denied. He maintained that if sin be necessary it ceases to be voluntary.[1] If sin be necessary, man could not be held responsible for it.[2] To deserve praise or blame a man must be a free agent. Sin in the Pelagian scheme derives its nature, its sinfulness, from the power of the individual to avoid it. From this it is but a step to assert the possibility of sinlessness in man. This Pelagius did not hesitate to do, asserting that there have been and can be sinless men.[3] The Old Testament furnishes examples of such saints; much more therefore must it be possible for men under the Gospel, which gives additional motives, higher rules for righteousness and the example of a perfect pattern, to live without sin.[4] At the same time the reign of sin in the world, on which Pelagius frequently laid stress,[5] makes it difficult for men to live long without sin, and the result is that though a converted man *may* avoid sin, yet he is not incapable of falling away, nor is it likely that he will remain permanently sinless.[6]

Lastly, there is the question of baptism. This, Pelagius maintained, was administered not for the remission of any inherited taint of sin, for there is no such thing, but for the higher blessedness of entrance into the kingdom of heaven, which is the special privilege of the Gospel.[7] It follows, then, that infants dying in their natural state and before the commission of actual sin would attain eternal life.

§ II.

Pelagius's View of Sin criticised.

Such is the Pelagian view of sin. In some respects this view has points of agreement with the tendencies of modern

[1] Aug. *Op. Imperf.* Si est naturale peccatum non est voluntarium.
[2] Ib. v 41. Quaeritis necessitatem rei quae esse non potest si patitur necessitatem.
[3] Pelag. *Ep. ad Demetr.* 5–6; Aug. *De Nat. et Grat.* 42.
[4] Pelag. apud Aug. *De Gratia Christi* 33.
[5] Pelag. *Ep. ad Demetr.* 8.
[6] This admission was made by Pelagius at the Synod of Diospolis. Aug. *De Gestis Pel.*
[7] Marius Mercator 503; Aug. *De Pecc. Orig.* 6, 21.

thought, but at the same time, that it has its weaknesses and defects, both doctrinal and scientific, it would be idle to deny. From the nature of the case and from the time at which Pelagius lived it could hardly have been otherwise.

According to the Pelagian theory, which places sin in individual action and predicates the terms 'good' and 'bad' only of the will, there is no need to seek any further for the origin of sin. His theory is in itself an attempted explanation of sin's origin. The evil action is an original and irregular exercise of the will. Sin is to be traced no farther than to this misuse of freedom. It begins and ends with a voluntary choice of what conscience declares to be wrong or a wilful neglect of what conscience declares to be right. To a certain extent this agrees with the Kantian position, but as a solution of this great problem the explanation offered by Pelagius is as inadequate as the explanation offered by Augustine. It fails to account for the universality of sin. Goodness is commanded. Goodness is offered as altogether desirable. The will therefore ought to will the good, whereas it universally inclines in the opposite direction. How is this to be accounted for? The answer is that all nature is bound by cause and effect. Beneath conduct there is that which determines conduct. Here, if anywhere, is the abiding root of sin. When moral consciousness awakens, man finds a predisposition to evil. Sin does not originate with us, it only steps forth. The Pelagian theory offers no explanation of this innate propensity to evil.

On the other hand the doctrine of Original Sin is equally unable to explain this condition. In tracing back the universality of sin to Adam's transgression it leaves altogether out of account the question how one, without such a predisposition to sin, could fall, or how an isolated act could have such far-reaching effects and dislocate Human Nature. In tracing the origin of sin to the first appearance of sin, we are only led to an infinite regress, for there must have been some reason, some predisposing cause, for Adam's Fall; otherwise he would not have fallen. On the whole, therefore, there is much to be said in favour of any theory of sin which regards it as the free act of the will in disobedience to the moral law. If Pelagius failed to account for the sin-

fulness of Human Nature, it must be remembered that others have failed as well, nor has any really satisfactory solution of this baffling problem been yet proposed.

The chief objection to the Pelagian view of sin is that it minimises sin's frightful significance. If a sin when committed passed completely away without having any effect on the character, sin at once would lose its awfulness and become a far less serious thing than it is usually supposed to be or than it really is. Any theory which tends to underestimate the exceeding sinfulness of sin is at once condemned.

But Pelagius did not in the least wish to minimise the gravity of sin. On the contrary, the excessive stress he laid on the freedom of the will was due to a desire to emphasise human responsibility and to show sin in its true light as a terrible evil to be avoided at all costs. His error lay in overlooking the power of sin as a habit, not in any condonation of sin. If his view be challenged as being liable to lead to a dulling of the sense of sin,[1] in that not only men's acts but also their sinful nature ought to cause them grief, it may be answered that the feeling that there is something sinful within our nature, for which we are not responsible and over which we can only mourn, may be equally challenged as a morbid and hypersensitive view, producing a false conscience which merely deplores sin in Human Nature instead of trying to root it out.

§ 12.

Pelagius's View of Grace Ambiguous. His Various Statements criticised.

In passing on to a statement of the Pelagian views on the subject of Divine Grace we are met by a twofold ambiguity in the use of the term by Pelagius. The first is an intentional ambiguity, resorted to by him as a method of defence in meeting the accusations of his opponents, and the second is a natural ambiguity, due to the different meanings of which the idea is capable. Sometimes he admits the necessity of Grace almost in the Augustinian sense of the term; at other times he limits it to the barest natural

[1] Mozley, *Predestination* ch. iii p. 98.

endowments, which, as Augustine observes, is no recognition of Grace at all. The truth is that Pelagius was willing to admit the doctrine of Grace as far as he could do so without damaging his theory of free-will and without frustrating his object, which was to deprive Christians of their indolent reliance on external help, which, they thought, would carry them to heaven without any effort on their part.

First of all let it be stated that Pelagius never denied Grace. He admitted the existence of Grace fully and freely, but he began by giving to the term a significance of his own. He took it to mean external benefits and natural endowments, which are all the gift of God. The being and constitution of man he regarded as a form of grace. In fact, Pelagius frequently began his sermons by praising man's glorious nature and the grace of creation, in which all alike participate.[1] This chiefly manifests itself in free-will, which he regarded as the special Grace with which man is endowed. Nature is created so good that it really stands in need of no external help.[2] This, however, is a form of Grace in which even heathen share. Pelagius therefore recognised a form of Grace confined to Jews and Christians, represented by the Mosaic Law and the Gospel. The revelation of God to man, the knowledge of His will and the teaching of the Bible are all included in this idea. In fact, all forms of instruction, however conveyed (doctrina), constitute a species of Grace.[3] But Pelagius also admitted that there was a form of Grace which only came through Christ, whose coming had been rendered necessary owing to the prevalence of sin in the world.[4] This Grace consists chiefly in the example set by Christ,[5] though it includes also the benefits conveyed by baptism and the forgiveness of sins. An outward act of forgiveness is all that Pelagius understood by the term

[1] Cf. Aug. *Op. Imperf.* iii 188. Qui gratiam confirmat, hominum laudat naturam.

[2] Pelag. *Ep. ad Demetr.*; *De Gratia Christi* 5; *De Natura et Gratia* passim.

[3] Aug. *De Gestis Pel.* 30. Gratiam dei et adjutorium . . . in libero arbitrio esse vel in lege ac doctrina.

[4] Aug. *Op. Imperf.* ii 217–22.

[5] Aug. *Epp.* clxxvii 4, 7, 8, 9, clxxix 3, cxciv 8, 9; *De Nat. et Grat.* 47, 53; *De Gestis Pelag.* 22, 30, 47; *De Grat. Christi* 2, 8, 45; *De Grat. et Lib. Arb.* 23–6; *De Sp. et Litt.* 32.

'justification,' and to prevent it conflicting with his theory of freedom or with the justice of God, he regarded it at most as a kind of "indulgence"[1] granted according to general merit and as a reward for individual effort.[2]

But this is not the only form of grace recognised by Pelagius. He also admitted the existence of what the Catholic Church has generally understood by the term, namely, an inward-working Divine energy, or in other words, the influence of the Holy Spirit not merely exerted upon the soul from without, but acting upon it from within; not merely awakening the mental realisation of duty, but inspiring and empowering the affections and the will.[3] He did not, however, regard this influence as being in any way necessary to the work of salvation. He merely held that it facilitated and helped forward the will to perform Christian duties and to avoid sin in those who had already taken the initial step and were striving to live a virtuous life.[4] Indeed, the Pelagian denial of the need of real Grace was founded on, and was a necessary corollary to, the denial of Original Sin. If man really suffered from a moral disease such as Augustine maintained, a supernatural remedy, a Divine restorative, might be necessary, but the whole conception of Original Sin was in the eyes of Pelagius an absurdity and a libel on God. Hence, because Grace in the usual acceptance of the term was not regarded by him as essential to man's salvation, he laid little stress on it; nay more, he even discouraged belief in it and kept it in the background in order to prevent men from relying on it and ignoring the real and sufficient powers which were already in their possession.

Such was the general position of Pelagius towards the idea of Grace. As a matter of fact, his language on the subject varies at different times, and he sometimes even seems to contradict himself. This is because the question of Grace was only regarded by him as of secondary importance. In

[1] See Harnack, *Hist. of Dogma* (Eng. Trans.) v 202 n. 1.
[2] Aug. *De Gestis Pelag.* 30. Dei gratiam secundum merita nostra dari, quia si peccatoribus illam det, videtur esse iniquus.
[3] Pelag. apud Aug. *De Gratia Christi* 8. Aug. *De Haeres.* 88.
[4] "Adjutorium quo melius" not "sine quo non."

Pelagianism, as Harnack says,[1] the doctrine of Grace amounts to an appendix badly connected with the main subject. This is not to say that Pelagius ever denied Divine Grace as an inward-working power. On the contrary, he publicly declared that the Grace of God was necessary not only every hour and moment, but also in every act,[2] and Julian, reproducing his master's views, described Grace as "sanctifying, restraining, inciting and illuminating the human soul".[3] This is more than creative grace, for it is something assisting the created nature. But the Pelagians denied the necessity of Prevenient Grace. They saw that, however necessary Divine assistance might be for a good work as a whole, at the bottom was a good act or movement performed by the will prior to the Divine assistance. Assisting Grace must be apprehended and used by an unassisted will. Otherwise, how can it be that, with an equal measure of Grace bestowed upon them, one man becomes good and another bad?

At the same time Pelagius did not hold that human merit always precedes Grace. He only says that it sometimes does.[4] Merit does not precede the call to give up a sinful life. It would be absurd to suppose that a man must be good in order to be helped to be good. And so Pelagius admitted that the power to will is itself a Divine gift,[5] and at the Synod of Diospolis he anathematised those who teach that the Grace of God is given according to our merits.[6] This admission, however, does not affect the Pelagian tenet of the independent power of the will and his idea of Grace as assisting the will (possibilitatem adjuvat).[7] The apparent inconsistency of Pelagius's language, which sometimes asserts the ability of nature and at other times the need of Grace, is to

[1] *Hist. of Dogma* (Eng. Trans.) v 203.

[2] Pelag. apud Aug. *De Grat. Christi* 2. Anathemo qui vel sentit vel dicit gratiam Dei non solum per singulas horas aut per singula momenta sed etiam per singulos actus nostros non esse necessariam.

[3] Aug. *Op. Imperf.* i 3. Sanctificando, coercendo, provocando, illuminando.

[4] Pelag. apud Aug. *De Grat. Christ* 22. On the incorrectness of Augustine's conclusions respecting Pelagius see Mozley's *Predestination* ch. iii p. 52 n. 2.

[5] Aug. *De Grat. Christi* 4.

[6] Ib. 3. Damnavit eos qui docent gratiam Dei secundum merita nostra dari.

[7] Pelag. *De Lib. Arbit.* apud Aug. *De Gratia Christi* 5.

be explained by his wish to show the logical necessity for an unassisted act of the human will in accepting and using Divine assistance. This position is sound enough, and is to be regarded as the only alternative to the doctrine of irresistible Grace; nor, as Mozley says, "had it been maintained with due modesty and reserve, as being one side of the whole mysterious truth relating to human action, would it have been otherwise than orthodox".[1]

§ 13.

Pelagius seeks Scriptural Support for his Views. Pelagianism no Novelty.

The Pelagians of course never ceased to regard themselves as Catholic Christians; consequently they were compelled to show the agreement of their views with Holy Scripture. Naturally therefore, when texts were quoted by his questioners, Pelagius expressed his full agreement with them and showed how they were understood by him. Thus he explained the critical passage Rom. v 12 as meaning that Adam caused all men to sin by following his example; Julian, indeed, arguing that the phrase "one man" proves that S. Paul referred to mere imitation of his sin, because for transmission of sin by generation two people would be necessary.[2] Then, again, Pelagius adduced the Scriptural instances of Abraham, who was bidden "to walk before God and be perfect", and of Zacharias and Elizabeth, who were described as "walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the law blameless", as affording proof of the possibility of sinlessness in man. He had no difficulty in explaining such references to Grace as that in 1 Cor. xv 10, and he declared that the famous passage Rom. vii 15–25, on which Augustine laid such stress, merely referred to the force of custom. In this and similar ways the Pelagians endeavoured to harmonise their views with Scripture and to repudiate the charge of heresy.

Indeed, it must be declared that the doctrine propounded by Pelagius was in reality no novelty. The contrary doctrines were the new dogmas. The Augustinian theory of Grace was

[1] *Predestination* ch. iii p. 53.

[2] *Op. Imperf.* ii 56.

never accepted in the East, which always regarded Grace as a means of illumination. Before Augustine, too, the Church had always strongly held the doctrine of freedom. The twofold acquittal of Pelagius in Palestine is important in more ways than one. Not only does it show that his condemnation was not above question, but it also shows that the East was really in sympathy with his views and found them in large measure in accordance with her own.

CHAPTER IV

AUGUSTINIANISM

ANALYSIS

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CHAPTER IV

AUGUSTINIANISM

§ 1.

Augustine's Views the Extreme Point of Reaction against Pelagianism. The Truth Double-sided.

It has for a long time been a matter for debate whether the Pelagian system arose out of the Augustinian or the Augustinian out of the Pelagian. Mozley thinks that historical evidence points to the former, and states that opposition to such doctrines as those of Augustine had no small share in leading Pelagius to form his peculiar views.[1] Harnack, on the other hand, declares that both systems arose independently of each other from the internal conditions of the Church.[2] But the dispute is not a matter of real consequence. Even though it be admitted that Augustine's doctrine of Sin and Grace was already formulated when he entered upon the controversy with Pelagius, yet there can be little doubt that his views became clearer and more precise owing to the opposition which he had to face.

Pelagianism as a theory of Human Nature turns on the freedom of the will. Augustinianism is based on the paramount importance of Divine Grace. In fact, the whole of Augustine's system forms an interesting commentary on his own personal and lifelong experience. He had not been, like Pelagius, a cloistered ascetic, shut off and protected from the temptations of the world. He had penetrated deep into the mystery of evil, and his conversion involved a great break with the past and a complete recasting of the inner life. He felt that Grace as a real and wonder-working action of the Holy Spirit had unceasingly pursued

[1] Mozley, *Predestination* p. 46.
[2] Harnack, *Hist. of Dogma* (Eng. Trans.) v 169.

him all his life. It had torn him from the allurements of the world, visited him in all his sins and pride, followed him through all changes of scene, until at last it led him, a changed and humble penitent, to the feet of Christ. It was only natural that in his case the Divine power in the work of salvation should overshadow everything else, and that he should think of Grace as working so strongly in man that it not only initiates and promotes right-doing, but even influences and overpowers the minds of the elect to such an extent that they are constrained, whether they will or no, to yield to its operation and to follow its guidance. Consequently, on hearing Pelagius's assertion of man's absolute free-will, Augustine could not repress his indignation, and relentlessly attacked what he regarded as mere human pride until he had humbled it as he himself had been humbled and had subjected it to the mighty working of the Holy Spirit. "What is this talk about free-will?" we can imagine him exclaiming. "It is quite untrue. Man's nature has not got within it an innate capacity for good, as men like Pelagius assert. It can and will perform nothing but what is bad. We do not come into the world in the same position as Adam was in when he was created. By him sin entered into the world and infected his whole posterity. The result is that we inherit from him, and are born with, and from our birth are seriously handicapped by, an ingrained moral disease which disturbs and dislocates the whole interior being. In other words, through the sin of Adam, man is morally dead. Adam's Fall was not merely the fall of one man; it was the fall of the whole race. In Adam all have sinned and have earned the anger of God."

It is thus seen at once that Augustine's views represent the extreme point of reaction against Pelagianism. This appears also in the totally different standpoints from which Grace is regarded in the two schemes. Not only do the opposing systems throw much light on each other, but inasmuch as their disagreement is not unfrequently due to the different aspect of the same truth which they take, it is important to form a correct estimate of the contribution made by both sides towards an understanding of the complex nature of man.

"Humanity has not been enfeebled by a fall", said Pelagius. "Man has complete freedom of will to choose the right. He does not *need* what you call Grace, because his nature has not lost the power to seek after righteousness and to attain virtue." "Man does need Grace", replied Augustine, "because his nature has altogether lost the power of free-will through the Fall of Adam, and has contracted thereby a taint, an evil tendency, a moral disease which requires a supernatural remedy, a Divine restorative. This Grace is the initiating principle of all good in us, and without it we can do nothing."

There is no doubt that on this subject, as on many others, truth is two-sided, and neither position meets satisfactorily all the facts of the case. Let it be remembered, too, that extreme views are always liable to shoot beyond the mark, and that if Pelagius was led by the exigencies of the controversy to extravagant and untenable conclusions, such was undoubtedly the case with Augustine, who, in addition to the one-sided view forced upon him by his personal experience, was carried vehemently along by the fire and force of an impetuous African nature. That the truth involved in the controversy between Pelagius and Augustine can be regarded in two totally different ways is rendered sufficiently obvious by the fact that the authority of Scripture can be adduced as clearly in behalf of the doctrine of free-will as in behalf of the doctrine of Predestination and Grace. Augustine, as Mozley points out,[1] made the mistake of going farther than Scripture, and instead of qualifying his views by the contrary truths contained in the same Scriptures, he makes of the one side of this truth a definite and determinate doctrine, a thing which the Bible never does. The result is that in Augustine's doctrine we cannot fail to be conscious of a good deal of narrowness, and we see in him from time to time an unwillingness to recognise facts when they are opposed to his position. In many respects it must be admitted that he led the way to erroneous views of Scripture, of Church Polity and of dogma which have left a deep mark on the history of Latin Christianity.

Inasmuch, then, as Augustinianism represents the an-

[1] *Predestination* p. 146.

tithesis to Pelagianism, it is advisable to examine its views under the same headings as were considered in the case of Pelagius, namely, Free-will, Sin and Grace.

§ 2.

Augustine's Theory of Free-will. Corruption of the Will of Man consequent on Adam's Sin. Difference between Eastern and Western View.

That man possesses free-will of some sort, even in spite of the Fall, Augustine of course acknowledges. It is a matter of ordinary experience that all men do at times choose one thing rather than another, and can distinguish their voluntary actions from those which are involuntary. He is not, however, very lucid or satisfactory in his discussion of this difficult problem, first because he approached this subject chiefly from the religious and hardly at all from the purely ethical side, and secondly, because he treated this most intractable of all questions with too great a confidence, as if it were capable of easy solution and could be at once dismissed as settled. It is possible, however, in spite of certain inconsistencies of expression, to trace the general theory on this subject that runs through, and is in fact indispensable for, his system of theology.

First he asserts [1] that Adam in his unfallen state possessed perfect free-will, and he goes on to describe this in such a way as to show what his conception of freedom was. Adam possessed when he was created a holy inclination or determination of his will. This tendency or natural aptitude for doing right was accompanied, for probationary purposes only, by an accidental and negative power in the opposite direction. Adam's bias in the direction of rectitude merely entailed a continuance in the holy state in which he was created; but the possession of power to do wrong implied the *possibilitas peccandi*. The possession of an unforced self-determination of the will to do right constituted, in Augustine's opinion, Adam's real freedom, and this freedom was not affected by the presence or absence of the ability to turn his will in the direction of evil. In fact,

[1] *De Libero Arbitrio* iii 17, 18.

Adam's freedom of will consisted in not using his power to do wrong rather than in using it—in continuing to do right and refusing to will to do evil. That power, however, the *possibilitas peccandi*, which is not for a moment to be confused with a sinful inclination, was superadded during the probationary period to emphasise the freedom possessed by unfallen man and to increase his merit and perfection if he retained his virtue. It was intended that it should vanish after the period of trial, and when it had so vanished Adam would still have free-will, but it would be the free-will of one who cannot now sin, like that of the angels and of God Himself. This is what Augustine meant by his famous paradox that the most perfect liberty is *non posse peccare*.

Here it should be noticed that there is a radical difference at the outset between the Eastern and the Western conception of perfect free-will. The Latin view, as has just been seen, is that freedom of will consists in self-determination. A faculty is free even when there is only one course open to it, if in adopting that course it acts entirely from within itself and is under no compulsion from without. The Greek view, on the other hand, regarded moral freedom as lying in the possibility of an alternative choice, and declared the will to be undetermined when it was created and not to be biased in the direction either of right or of wrong. Thus what the Westerns regarded as the accident, the Easterns regarded as the essence of freedom.

As soon, then, as Adam made his choice of the alternative course and originated sin *de nihilo*, he forfeited by the very act the power of self-determination to righteousness. The transient characteristic of the will, namely, the power to sin, which was intended to belong to it only during the time of probation, became henceforth its permanent and sole characteristic, for had he possessed a like power in the contrary direction, that power would have enabled him also to originate holiness *de nihilo*. But the power to originate holiness belongs to God alone and is incommunicable to created wills. Even before the Fall Adam had not the power of originating holiness; he had only the option of remaining in his holy state, but that option he rejected. The only self-motion, therefore, of the apostate will is

in the direction of sin, so that fallen Adam was unable to do anything but evil, and without external help was powerless to do anything good.

Free-will, therefore, in the sense of the alternative choice of good or evil, the *possibilitas utriusque partis*, was lost by the Fall and is not possessed by man in his existing state. This is a point on which Augustine lays great stress. The corruption of Human Nature which arises owing to the unity of the human race in Adam extends to the will. "My will", he says in his *Confessions*,[1] "the enemy held and thence had made a chain for me and bound me." Not only a part but the whole of Human Nature was vitiated. Here again a difference between the Latin and the Greek anthropology is seen. The Eastern view of heredity was that only the physical nature is propagated. The Western view is that the rational and voluntary principle as well as the physical and animal principle is transmitted, and that therefore the inherited corruption due to the Adamic connexion extends not only to the nature but to the will. What the Greek anthropologist confined to a part of man Augustine affirmed of the whole man.

§ 3.

Corruption of Man's Nature involves the Loss of Part only of Freedom of the Will. The remaining Element of Free-will necessary to establish Guilt and to justify Punishment. Two Roots of Action: (1) Original Sin and (2) Grace.

For Augustine there was no escape from the universality or from the necessity of sin. Here a difficulty at once arises. How can a man be condemned if he is not a free agent? Yet that he is guilty is manifest if only on the ground of the moral sense. There is no getting away from the condemnation of sin by the conscience. Augustine's answer is that, though the corruption of Human Nature involves a loss of free-will, yet it does not involve the loss of the whole of it. Some degree of free-will exists in every man, owing to which the soul, even when weakened by sin, is a nobler being than an inanimate thing such as the light of the sun.[2] Indeed, to

[1] VIII 10, 11.

[2] *De Lib. Arb.* iii 5.

the end of his life Augustine acknowledges some remnant of freedom even in those whom he regards as being most completely in bondage. This statement is involved in his axiom that all sin is voluntary. This is frequently asserted by Augustine. "So voluntary a thing is sin", he says,[1] "that an act is not sin at all if it be not voluntary." Even when we speak of involuntary sins which are committed in ignorance or under great temptation, we must not be understood to exclude will altogether.[2] It may seem that Augustine's assertion of the voluntariness of sin implies the power to refrain from sin, but this he does not grant. Augustine's meaning is that all sin is committed by a self-determination of the will, apart from external compulsion, and that its source is in the voluntary nature of man.

Augustine, then, admits a certain degree of free-will even in the corrupted nature of fallen man. He realises that the denial of free-will would do violence to the conception of Divine justice, which punishes man for sin as if he had power to avoid it. He recognises, too, that Scripture implies the doctrine of free-will by its use of commands, promises and threats, and by speaking to men as if they have free-will.

This element of freedom in the will places man on a different footing from other created things and endows him with a certain amount of creative or at least originating power. Thus the mind takes its place as a 'cause' and ranks "in ordine causarum." For this reason it may and often does produce effects contrary to the will of the Creator. But at the same time Augustine contends for a continuous chain of causality of which God is the first cause, and at any cost of consistency a place in this scheme must be found for the will. It cannot be regarded as an intrusive element, but must be a force inside the order of nature. Hence he taught that the will, in spite of its power of self-determination, must itself be eventually referred to the first cause, namely, to the creating will of God, and that the will of man is not a creator in the same sense in which God is a

[1] *De Vera Relig.* xiv. Usque adeo peccatum voluntarium est malum ut nullo modo sit peccatum si non sit voluntarium.

[2] *Retract.* i 13.

Creator, because it is very limited in power and is itself largely influenced by external forces.

That the mind is carried this way and that by continual cross currents of conflicting motives Augustine was well aware, but inasmuch as the great majority of these neutralise one another, they may for all practical purposes be neglected in considering the cause behind the will which really determines its action, for this must be the effect of one cause and one cause only, and that is the strongest of the impulses to which the mind is exposed. Augustine's language on this point is interesting, and sheds some light on his view as to the determination of the will. Pelagius, in asserting that mankind possesses absolute freedom of choice, maintained that this power to act either way,[1] the *possibilitas utriusque partis*, is a 'root' planted in men by God, which is capable of producing either virtue or vice according to the use made of it. In his eyes good and evil actions arise out of one and the same moral condition of the agent. Augustine contradicted this. It is absurd, he says,[2] to suppose that both virtue and vice can come out of the same root—the same moral condition. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. On this ground he denied the existence in man of a power to act either way according to choice, and asserted that there must be *two* roots, not a single root, of action. A right action proceeds out of and implies a good root, which necessarily produces only right actions, while an evil action proceeds out of and implies a bad root, which necessarily produces only bad actions. According to Augustine, man is capable of either root, but that is all. He denied that the same root is able to produce either fruit. Furthermore, since all men do evil, it is clear that all men possess in themselves the root that produces evil. That root is Original Sin. The other root which produces good acts is Grace. Thus Augustine maintained that the two predominant motives which influence men are the inherent taint or bias towards evil, which we inherit from Adam, and the Grace of God.

[1] Pelag. apud Aug. *De Gratia Christi* 18.
[2] Unam eandemque radicem constituit bonorum et malorum, l.c.

§ 4.

AUGUSTINE'S THEORY OF FREE-WILL INCONSISTENT. FOREKNOWLEDGE AND PREDESTINATION OPPOSED TO FREE-WILL. AUGUSTINE'S DOCTRINE NOTHING MORE THAN AN ASSERTION OF VOLUNTARY ACTION.

This, however, so far from being an elucidation of free-will, is found on examination to be a denial of that doctrine. Augustine in effect maintains that man is not free to choose between good and evil, but is completely governed by sin. The will without Grace can only do evil. The direction of the will to good must be God's gracious gift. But that is an external force, and a will that is actuated by an external force ceases to be self-determined and can no longer be regarded as perfectly free.

In fact, the whole of Augustine's system is based on a conception which is wholly inconsistent with the doctrine of free-will. The foreknowledge of God,[1] for example, is not easy to reconcile with real freedom of the human will, as Augustine himself realised, for he admits in his more unguarded moments that this involves a necessary determination of the will. But if the reconciliation of Divine foreknowledge with freedom of action on the part of man presents difficulties, much more is the doctrine of free-will opposed to the theory of irresistible Grace and to the doctrine of Predestination. The truth is that Augustine's admission of free-will was forced from him by certain irresistible facts of human experience and Scriptural teaching, but his conception of it is imperfect and his definition of it is found to break down when subjected to careful examination. Freedom, he says, consists in power. Man is free when it is in his power to do a thing. Power he defines as the will to do something coupled with the ability to do it.[2] Freedom of will, therefore, is power to will if we please, which, he says, is a power possessed by all men.[3] When we will, we will with free-will.[4] The Augustinian definition of free-will is therefore

[1] Canon T. A. Lacey, however, suggests that modern science *might* find a solution of this difficulty in an analysis of the concept of time, which to God is neither past, present nor future. To speak at all, therefore, of *fore*-knowledge in regard to God is a mere concession to human modes of thought (*Pringle Stuart Lectures for 1914*, Longmans, p. 63).

[2] *De Spiritu et Litt.* 31.

[3] *De Libero Arbitrio* iii 31.

[4] *De Civitate Dei* xiv 12.

little more than the bare assertion of the existence of the will, an assertion made alike by those who adhere to the doctrine of free-will in its fullest sense and by those who do not so adhere. And this is all that Augustine's doctrine of free-will amounts to when examined. It is nothing more than the bare assertion of voluntary action. Let it be repeated, in conclusion, that in spite of apparent admissions in Augustine that fallen man retains a certain degree of freedom, there is really no place in the Augustinian scheme for the admission of free-will, which he does not so much explain as attempt to explain away.

§ 5.

Confusion in Augustine between Original and Actual Sin. His Theory of Sin as a Negation.

In considering Augustine's conception and definition of Sin, a confusion is caused at the very outset by the lack in his writings of any real distinction between Original and Actual Sin. It is unfortunate that the term *peccatum* was ever used for Original Sin, inasmuch as it suggests actual sin, that is, an act on the part of the individual arising from personal revolt against God's will, for which man is as much responsible as for any other act which he performs, whereas the addition *originale* implies a condition for which we are no more responsible than we are for our physical constitution; it implies a moral disorder contracted at our birth, a corruption which affects our inner nature and forms what S. Paul describes as a law of sin working in our members, by which he intended a principle of sin out of which actual sin in due course is liable to arise.

The origin of evil was a problem which exercised Augustine's mind from his earliest years. The Manichaean doctrine of the positive and independent existence of evil which found favour in his eyes for a time he eventually rejected for the Platonic idea that evil is privative, a negative state, a *privatio boni*. This conception Augustine retained to the end. But sin is the only evil that he really recognised, and this he describes as *spontaneus defectus a bono*. That the falling away from the good is voluntary, i.e. that it

has its origin in the will, Augustine repeats constantly, and, what is more, he asserts this not only of actual sin but also of Original Sin. This statement he defends in his controversy with Julian, who presses this question upon him,[1] by saying that Original Sin was transmitted from the will of the first man. Both kinds of sin, he says, are the product of the human will, but Original Sin is the product of the human will as yet unindividualised in Adam, while actual sin is the product of the human will as individualised in his posterity. With this statement, so far as it applies to actual sin, there can be no quarrel, but as a defence of the voluntariness of Original Sin it is unsatisfactory and can only be regarded as formal, because if the term 'voluntary' means anything, it must refer to the person of whom the evil is predicated and to whom it is imputed as a sin; it cannot possibly apply to a condition in which a person finds himself at birth.

§ 6.

THE PHRASE "ORIGINAL SIN" AN INVENTION OF AUGUSTINE. ORIGINAL SIN A CORRUPTION OF HUMAN NATURE RESULTING IN A STATE OF INABILITY TO DO RIGHT.

We now pass to a consideration of Augustine's theory of Original Sin. First let it be stated that the phrase 'Original Sin' does not occur anywhere before Augustine's day. He invented it and made use of it in one of his early works.[2] Perhaps it was suggested to him by a similar expression, 'Originis Injuriam,' which had been used by S. Ambrose;[3] while still earlier S. Cyprian had said of a new-born infant, "having been born in the likeness of Adam in the flesh, it derived at its very birth the taint of ancient death".[4]

But though Augustine invented the phrase 'Original Sin,' he maintained that he did not invent the doctrine, but that he found it already existing in the Church. Infants, for instance, were held to be in need of redemption. That would be meaningless if they were not in the power of sin.

[1] Apud Aug. *De Nuptiis et Concupiscentia* II xxviii 2.
[2] *Ad Simplicianum* I i 10.
[3] *Apol. Proph. David* i 56.
[4] Ep. lxiv. Secundum Adam carnaliter natus contagium mortis antiquae prima nativitate contraxit.

Again, Augustine met the Pelagians at every point with the argument that Original Sin is definitely taught in Scripture. This argument, of course, begs the question, for though universal depravity is recognised as a fact throughout the Old Testament, no explanation of it is offered. Jewish writings, however, outside the Canon show that the Jews were gradually arriving at some form of doctrine on the subject, and were inclined to hold that universal sin was due to the fact that the Fall of Adam had permanently affected his descendants.[1] Augustine argued, however, that in support of it even the teaching of S. Paul might be adduced. He claimed that there is a reference to Original Sin in the following passage: "As through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned: for until the law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression, who is a figure of Him that was to come." [2]

Building upon this foundation, Augustine constructed his theory of Original Sin. Adam's Fall had a far-reaching effect upon mankind. By it sin gained an entrance into the world, so that Adam injured not himself alone but all his posterity, transmitting to them a corrupted nature, which has in consequence an innate taint, warp and propensity towards sin. The result is that man can of himself do no good thing, but only that which is evil continually. Original Sin, therefore, in Augustine's eyes, is a defect of nature. It is a state of inability to do right. Thus his conception of it combines the physical and the ethical view of evil. He regarded man as labouring under the physical infirmity of an enfeebled nature, in proof of which he pointed to the general feeling of weakness and captivity experienced by man, and at the same time he declared that the whole human race was morally corrupt, and for proof of this he appealed to the universal sense of sin and the

[1] See Wisd. ii 23 seq.; Ecclus. xxv 24 (33); 4 Ezra iii 7, 21 seq.; Apoc. Baruch, xvii 3, xxiii 4, etc.

[2] Rom. v 12–15. On the difficulties of this passage see above, p. 17.

judgement passed by the soul upon itself. "To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do."[1] The physical infirmity seems to be brought out in this passage, just as the moral corruption of the human race is proved to Augustine's satisfaction by the following verse: "I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members".[2]

So far Augustine was merely summing up the theological views of the Fathers who had preceded him. The corruption of Human Nature, based on the language of S. Paul and corroborated by human experience, had been voiced in varying degrees of clearness by the Church for three centuries, but it reached its culmination as a doctrine in Augustine, and was first drawn up and formulated into a definite Church dogma by him.

To assert the fact, then, that there is a taint in the nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam is one matter, but to theorise about it and to account for it is quite another. Augustine, however, made the attempt and it is here that the inconsistencies and defects of his conclusions can be detected.

§ 7.

The View that this Taint is due to Heredity involves "Traducianism."

The first principle laid down by Augustine in connexion with the doctrine of Original Sin is that the presence of evil in the world is due to heredity. The prevalence of wrong-doing must be put down not to the mere imitation of Adam's sin, but to the possession of an enfeebled and corrupted nature inherited from Adam, which has left man incapable of doing right or of making any movement by himself in the direction of salvation. How, then, was sin

[1] Rom. vii 19. Cf. Aug. *Op. Imperf.* v 50. Qui dicit: Quod nolo malum, hoc ago, responde utrum necessitatem habeat.

[2] Rom. vii 23, which, however, the Pelagians explained as referring to the force of custom.

propagated? The Pelagians denied propagation altogether. Augustine boldly declared that sin is passed on by natural processes of generation, pointing in proof to the mean, selfish, malevolent traits in human character which often display themselves in young children and resemble closely those of a parent or an ancestor. The objection that hereditary sin is impossible, inasmuch as moral qualities can obviously not be involved in the operation of birth and it is necessarily only physical characteristics which can be reproduced by procreation, he evaded by the appeal to mystery, which is of course no solution of the difficulty, but merely a relegation of the problem to the region of the inexplicable. In fact, the theory that the results of the Fall of our first parents can be transmitted by natural descent implies the traducianist view that the soul of the child is generated from the soul of its parents. Though Augustine seems to have shrunk from definitely adopting this theory, yet he was certainly accused of holding it by his opponents, and his doctrine of inherited sinfulness does logically require some such view to support it.[1]

It must be admitted, however, that the doctrine of inherited sin and of the corruption of Human Nature as a result of Adam's Fall, though beset by numerous difficulties, has at least one advantage in that it offers an intelligible explanation of the universality of sin. The universality of sin is a fact that must be admitted by all, and yet it presents a serious difficulty to those who hold the doctrine of free-will. Why, if the will be free, should there not be an equal and corresponding prevalence of goodness? Experience shows that there is not. The only conclusion is that there must be an evil tendency in the will. Sometimes man wills and pursues the good and sometimes he does not, but the result is the same. He can never attain it. We are all under a wretched necessity of being unable to refrain from sin.[2] Augustine seems at least to be on safe ground when he maintains the universal corruption of Human Nature as the only explanation of the universality of sin, but to

[1] Harnack says: "Augustine was compelled to teach Traducianism, which is, however, a heresy" (*Hist. of Dogma*, Eng. Trans. v 217).

[2] Misera necessitas non posse non peccare.

account for this universal corruption by the doctrine of heredity is another matter, and comes dangerously near to resolving Original Sin into physical evil.[1]

§ 8.

Identification of Original Sin with Sexual Lust Manichaean. Death, Physical as well as Spiritual, a Result of Adam's Fall.

Another theory propounded by Augustine, and one which has had grave consequences in theology, is his attempted identification of Original Sin with sexual lust. This first definitely appears in his treatise against Pelagius *De Peccatorum Meritis*,[2] but it was developed in his two books *De Nuptiis et Concupiscentia*, in which he deals with the objection that his doctrine dishonours marriage. He admits that the act of generation, being a natural function, is not in itself evil and might in a sinless man be natural and good,[3] but as things are, he says, it is always attended in a greater or less degree by an element of lustfulness. In proof of this he refers to the universal instinct of modesty and reserve in dealing with such matters, which is the testimony of the human conscience to its inherent shame.[4] The doctrine of the intrinsic sinfulness of concupiscence is of course Manichaean in origin, and the reason why Augustine retained it when he discarded his other Manichaean views is that it seemed to him to support his conception of inherited sin. But even this theory is inadequate as a solution of the perplexing problem of Original Sin. Not only does it fail to draw any distinction between the children of lawful and chaste wedlock and the children born in adultery, but it implies that children conceived without concupiscence—and such a union is at least possible—would be free from the universal taint of sin, and therefore it is inconsistent with the theory of heredity and is not supplementary of it.

Then, again, it must be stated that not only did Augustine hold that man is necessarily sinful through heredity, but he

[1] Cf. Tennant, *Origin and Propagation of Sin* p. 38.
[2] i. 29. [3] *De Nupt. et Concup.* i 1 and 21. [4] Ib. i 22.

also attached guilt to birth-sin. It is now generally felt that Augustine's view of the guilt of Original Sin involves a contradiction in terms and on the face of it stands self-condemned. Guilt is only predicable of the individual's wilful act, and for that reason this view has been rejected by many theologians who, while retaining Original Sin, repudiate Original Guilt. Augustine was himself apparently not unconscious of the difficulty, and sought to defend and explain his theory of imputation by maintaining that we were all potentially in Adam, and were in fact Adam, at the moment when he sinned.[1] His theory, in short, is this: that owing to the original unity of the human race we all participated in Adam's sin, because Adam at the moment of the Fall included in himself entire humanity. Therefore all men are guilty from birth and deserve God's utmost wrath and eternal punishment, even antecedently to actual sin. Thus mankind is a *massa perditionis*, doomed to death. Indeed, death in all its forms is one of the consequences of the Fall. Its introduction into the world by Adam is a doctrine on which Augustine lays the greatest stress. Adam would not himself have died if he had not sinned, but by his Fall he has subjected all men to the same dreadful necessity.[2] Nor does this merely mean physical death. By his sin Adam deprived himself of the presence of God and of the grace that supported him in his sinless state. This is spiritual death, for the soul without God is dead. This state of moral death, handed on by Adam to his descendants, accounts for the wretchedness and misery felt by mankind at their separation from God and for their inability to do right, at which the voice of conscience cries aloud with S. Paul: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"[3] Then, lastly, the punishment for sin appears in the form of eternal death, which is the final and greatest penalty of sin. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." The

[1] Aug. *Op. Imperf.* i 48. In lumbis Adam fuimus. See also i 57, ii 163, iii 25, etc.

[2] Pelagius denied this. Adam, he declared, would have died even if he had not sinned. The passages in which S. Paul speaks of death as the punishment of sin he interpreted as meaning spiritual death only. See Aug. *De Pecc. Mer.* i 2.

[3] Rom. vii 24.

guilt of Original Sin is quite sufficient for damnation, according to Augustine, and therefore all men, independently of their actual sins, deserve eternal punishment because of their participation in Adam's Fall and because of the solidarity of the human race. Hence Augustine taught that infants dying without baptism, the only means provided for the washing away of birth-sin, fall under the same condemnation, and since they possess Original Sin must of necessity be lost.

§ 9.

Sin the Penalty of Sin. This View opposed to all Theodicy.

Another principle formulated by Augustine in connexion with the doctrine of Original Sin is the theory that "sin is the penalty of sin",[1] i.e. the state of inability to do right in which all men find themselves may be explained as being in the nature of a punishment. The enslavement of man to sin is a penal state to teach man at once his own weakness and his need for Grace. To the objection that such a dire result would make Adam's sin too great, too far-reaching in its effect, Augustine would answer that the magnitude of Adam's sin had not yet been fully perceived by the Church; that because he sinned with free-will and need not have sinned at all, the Fall was inconceivably great, that it cannot be over-estimated, and that consequently the punishment of it is not incommensurate with the offence, but reveals it to us in all its enormity. The magnitude of the punishment should, he taught, lead us to a truer estimate of the exceeding sinfulness of the sin of Adam and, indeed, of sin generally.

A difficulty is at once suggested by the theory that "sin is the punishment for sin", and that is that, if sin be thus imposed by God, how can man be blamed for it? And this difficulty is closely connected with the objection that it is contrary to justice for a man to be accounted guilty for a sin which he has not individually and voluntarily committed. Here it may be stated that never was Augustine less con-

[1] Peccatum poena peccati. *De Pecc. Mer.* ii 22.

vincing and less successful than in his attempts to justify God. Sometimes he declares that man is not competent to judge God, appealing to the grim rhetorical question of S. Paul: "Nay but, O Man, who art thou that repliest against God?" At other times he insists that we must not set up two moral standards, one for the will of man and one for the will of God, and so he is constantly labouring in face of grave difficulties to justify God's actions in relation to men by seeking for analogies in the ordered working of nature Then, when he fails to satisfy himself, he falls back wearily on faith in the beneficent arrangement of God in constituting Human Nature not on a purely individualistic, but on an organic principle. The solidarity of the race is left him as the only intelligible explanation of the theory that sin is the punishment of sin; and he attempts to vindicate Divine justice for punishing one man for the sin of another, for this is the real meaning of the guilt of Original Sin, by again appealing to mystery. Original Sin, he said, is a mystery and Divine justice is a mystery, nor can we attempt to fathom the reasons why God visits the sins of the fathers upon the children. The fact remains that He does so. The only thing of which we can be sure is that it fits in somehow with the great plan on which the universe is worked, and that plan is unquestionably good. The objection raised by Pelagius that God cannot be less just than He wishes man to be, Augustine met by saying that God does many things that it would be wrong for man to do.[1] He who gave life, for instance, can, if He chooses, take it away, and who is man that he should question the mysterious working of God? This attempt to crush a moral difficulty by appeal to mystery was bound to fail, for we cannot believe in a justice which punishes those who have not willingly sinned. Nor does the theory of the imperfection of our knowledge explain the difficulty satisfactorily, for if God justly condemns the innocent, His conception of justice must be different from that conception of it which He has implanted in man.

[1] *Op. Imperf.* iii 22. Facit enim Deus aliquando contra quae facienda mandavit. Ib. 23. Aliud facit Deus ut Deus, aliud imperat homini ut homini.

§ 10.

GRACE THE ROOT OF ALL GOOD ACTION. AUGUSTINE'S VIEW OF GRACE AS IRRESISTIBLE GOES TOO FAR. FOUR ASPECTS OF GRACE.

We now pass on to consider what is in fact the main feature in the Augustinian system, the doctrine of Divine Grace.

It has already been stated that Augustine controverted the Pelagian doctrine of free-will as the efficient cause of all actions, both good and bad, and maintained that there must be two roots of conduct, one productive of bad actions, which is none other than Original Sin, and the other productive of good actions, which can only be the Grace of God. His views on this subject form the principal feature of his teaching and have largely influenced the opinions of the Church from the fifth century to the present day. His theory, moreover, was not identical with that of his predecessors, nor was it arrived at in a moment. It developed gradually as time went on, and became more and more explicit in his later writings as the result of much controversy and thought and of a careful study of the Pauline Epistles. Through all his discussions and statements on the subject there runs the one prominent idea that Human Nature stands in constant need of external help to enable it to act aright, and that it can do nothing pleasing and acceptable to God of its own unaided strength. Owing to the corruption of Human Nature and the inherent weakness of the will, Augustine maintained that man needs at every point and throughout his whole life fresh supplies of supernatural aid.

The Church owes much to Augustine's conception of Grace as a real power communicated by God to man, since on this conception the whole idea of sacramental efficacy is based. If man were independent of Grace and could in certain conditions attain virtue without external help, or if Grace merely meant such natural endowments as man necessarily receives as a gift from Heaven, the sacramental system would at once fall to the ground. The Grace of God as an active energy imparted to man and working in

him through the Holy Spirit is plainly declared in Scripture and is approved by human experience.

Unfortunately, however, Augustine went too far. The function of Grace is to assist the will, and to help man to do right. Augustine regarded it as absolutely controlling the will. This seems to be the secret of all the exaggeration and misconception in regard to Grace for which the Augustinian scheme was responsible.

The idea of irresistible Grace is first definitely evolved and propounded as a theory in the treatise *De Correptione et Gratia*, where Augustine examines his earlier definition of Grace as 'an assistance to will and action',[1] and shows that, in proportion to the weakness of Human Nature, strength in the external aid becomes increasingly necessary. If the will were strong, then weak Grace might suffice. This was the case with Adam before the Fall. In that stage of existence co-operative Grace was sufficient, because Adam had free-will and strength in himself to refrain from sin, had he chosen to do so. But when the will is weak, then a stronger measure of Grace is necessary to draw man from sin and to keep him in the path of virtue, and since owing to the corruption of Human Nature the will is altogether impotent, it becomes at once clear that Grace must be absolute or irresistible in order to counteract it. To show how completely passive man is in the work of regeneration, Augustine refers by way of example to the case of infants, who "in the reception of Grace not only manifest no act of their own will, but even cry and struggle when the holy sacrament of baptism is administered to them."[2] Mankind has revolted from God and has not in itself one spark of the Divine life. It lies prostrate, hopeless and helpless. It can do nothing of itself to help itself. Here Grace steps in and manifests itself to rescue, save and redeem fallen man and to bring him back to God. It is the work of the Mediator, "who by His one sacrifice has appeased the anger of God."[3] By His death He removed the barrier between man and God and broke the power of the Devil, enabling

[1] Adjutorium voluntatis et actionis.
[2] Aug. *De Gratia et Lib. Arbit.* 13.
[3] *De Fide* 3.

the Grace of God to work and save from eternal death those who are brought under its influence.

Now, this irresistible Grace appears in the Augustinian scheme in furo different aspects:

First, there is "prevenient Grace" (*gratia praeveniens*), which gives the first motion towards goodness. It supplies the call (vocatio) that snatches man from his sinful condition and by the instrumentality of the moral law produces the sense of sin and guilt, and then, by means of the promise of forgiveness as revealed in the Gospel, leads the soul to Christ. Thus it constitutes the beginning of salvation (initium salutis), prior to which no man can rise and turn towards God. It is the conversion of the sinner, the commencement of faith in the natural man which accepts unquestioningly the fact of the redeeming work of Christ.

Secondly, there is "operating Grace" (*gratia operans*),[1] which after the first call produces the will to do right. This is seen in a changed state of heart and will, which lays aside evil desires and begins to long for righteousness: which sees in God the highest good and craves for strength to do what is right. This new frame of mind is the result of justification by faith, which is an act which takes place once for all at the opening chapter of the new life. Justification, it is to be noticed, Augustine regarded not merely as an outward act of forgiveness but as an inward purification through the power of faith.[2]

Thirdly, there is "co-operating Grace" (*gratia co-operans*), which supports the will in its efforts and struggles and enables it to perform its desire. Traces of the apostate nature still remain in the regenerate soul, and there follows a lifelong conflict between the remainder of this apostate nature and the new man. This is the process that goes on through life; and co-operating Grace assists the renovated will to carry into effect the good which it now desires to do, operating by means of the various channels supplied in the Church of Christ. It should be observed that whereas other schools of thought used the phrase "co-operative Grace" as opposed to the monergistic view of irresistible

[1] Based on such texts as Phil. ii 13: "It is God that worketh in us both to will and to do".

[2] *Op. Imperf.* ii 165.

Grace and as consistent with and, indeed, part of the doctrine of free-will, Augustine used it as one of the functions of Grace, which in his scheme is always efficacious or irresistible.

Lastly, there is, in the fourth place, the highest and most important form of Grace, namely, the gift of perseverance, without which all that went before is useless. This gift of perseverance (*donum perseverantiae*) constitutes the final and crowning act of Grace, and is the only sure sign that an individual is one of the elect. In fact, it is only in the case of those who are endowed with this gift that Grace is really irresistible, for irresistible Grace does not imply that no form of Grace can be resisted by the sinner, but that when Grace reaches that special degree which regenerates a man so completely that he perseveres to the end, it then overcomes the sinner's opposition, preserves him from falling away and enables him to attain salvation.

§ 11.

Grace a Free Gift. Augustine's Doctrine of Predestination.

Such in Augustine's theory is the fourfold function of irresistible Grace, the gift of which to mankind is entirely free and gratuitous on the part of God. Otherwise it would belie its name and would cease to be Grace.[1] It is not given for any will or seeking on the part of man. It forms itself the summons or call to goodness. Nor is it given for any merit or qualification on our part. It is given, as Augustine expressly says, "not because a man believes but in order that he may believe." Without Grace there can be no merit. But when given, it creates merit,[2] just as it creates the will to do right.

How, then, are we to account for the fact that some men are regenerated and some are not, if all receive an equal measure of Grace? The answer is that God from eternity determined to rescue some from the fallen mass of mankind (*massa perditionis*), which, as guilty of Original

[1] The phrase "gratia gratis data" occurs constantly in Augustine's works. Cf. *Enchir.* 107: Gratia vero nisi gratis est, gratia non est.

[2] *Ep. ad. Vitalem* 5, gratia dat merita cum donatur.

Sin, falls justly a prey to eternal death. The number of these is fixed by unconditional decree (*decretum absolutum*), so that it can be neither increased nor diminished. If these at any time abandon the right path, they are recalled to it. They cannot perish.[1] If it be asked why, since He is almighty, He does not save all, it must be replied that, since all are not saved, clearly He does not will the salvation of all.[2] This doctrine Augustine tried ingeniously to reconcile with the text that "God will have all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth,"[3] by saying that 'all' means not 'all men,' but some out of all classes and conditions of men.[4] This is proved, he says, by the fact that many children die without Grace being given to them and without baptism, though they have never willingly rejected the gift. The fixed number of the elect (certus numerus electorum) are supplied with all gifts necessary for bringing them to salvation, and Grace works irresistibly in them.[5] The reason why they are thus chosen, called, sanctified and saved is inscrutable and rests in the secret counsel of God.[6] "By giving to some that which they do not deserve, God has willed that His Grace shall be truly gratuitous and therefore real. By not giving to all, He shows what they deserve. He is good in benefiting a certain number and just in punishing the rest."[7]

It is clear that the doctrine of irresistible Grace involves and implies the doctrine of absolute Predestination, that is, Predestination to life and not merely to privilege. If Grace be irresistible it must be confined to the few, otherwise all men would be saved. The fact that some men are given up to sin and are manifestly reprobate proves that Divine Grace is not given to all. The condition of the non-elect is repeatedly expressed by negatives—those whom God does not draw, does not teach, those who are not set free, who do not receive. These must be divided into two classes: first, there are those who have never heard the Gospel; and secondly, there are those who receive a measure of

[1] *De Corrept. et Gratia* 13, 20, 23, 39.
[2] *Ep. ad Vital.* 5, 6.
[3] 1 Tim. ii 4.
[4] *Enchir.* 103; *Contra Jul. Pel.* iv 8.
[5] *De Corrept. et Gratia* 13.
[6] Ib. 17.
[7] *De Dono Persev.* 28–9.

Grace at the commencement and display virtue for a time, but fall away and finally perish, because they have not received its final stage, namely, the gift of perseverance. It may seem surprising that God gives to some men all manner of virtues and yet withholds from them the gift of perseverance, but it is no more surprising than that some men have no Grace, no opportunities at all given to them, and have no portion in Christ. Nor is this any reason, says Augustine, for impugning Divine justice, for if God does not give Grace to all, He is not bound to give it to any. Even among men a creditor may forgive debts to some and not to others.[1]

With regard to the doctrine of reprobation or predestination to death, Augustine's language varies. Sometimes he seems to shrink from saying that God predestinates man to destruction, on the ground that Predestination can only have regard to such things as God Himself works, whereas sin is not His work.[2] At other times he distinctly favours this stern dogma as the only logical deduction from his theory of irresistible Grace. The *Enchiridion* clearly contains it, but it began to be specially developed, says Tillemont,[3] in the *De Correptione et Gratia*, which was written in 427 and was followed up by the *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* and the *De Dono Perseverantiae*. In one of his early works Augustine had declared that Predestination is grounded on foreknowledge—an opinion which was already held in the Church. But as his views of Grace developed and as the Pelagian controversy advanced, he referred to this as a mistaken notion which he had held before he became a bishop, and began to set forth a more absolute Predestination, such as has so largely entered into the controversies of later times. This doctrine had never been held in the Church and was in every sense of the word a novelty. But at the same time Augustine seems to have stopped short of the idea of a positive decree of perdition, and the doctrine of reprobation was never urged so consistently and relentlessly by him as it was subsequently, by Gottschalk in the ninth century and by Calvin in the sixteenth.

[1] *Ep.* 194, 2–3; *Ad Bonif.* ii 12. [2] *Op. Imperf.* i 121.
[3] *Mémoires* xiii 878.

§ 12.

NATURE AND MEANING OF GRACE. THE 'LETTER' AND THE 'SPIRIT'.

From the consideration of the effects of Grace in the Augustinian scheme and of the mode of its operation, we pass on to its nature, to which some reference must now be made. The view of Augustine on this point may be gathered from one of the most beautiful and characteristic of his writings, namely, the book *De Spiritu et Littera*. In this work he describes Evangelical Grace as the presence of the Holy Spirit within the soul, sent by God for the purpose of creating true holiness in man, and to enable him to perform works which are pleasing in God's sight. In connexion with this he discusses the famous text, 2 Cor. iii 6, "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." By the 'letter' he understood not the literal or outward meaning of the text, but the Law addressing man from outside, denouncing, instructing, and explaining the meaning of sin, which yet does not appeal to the heart nor arouse any inner craving or desire to perform the will of God. The natural result of the letter is to goad the corrupt will to still more vigorous opposition, to make it more obstinate and determined to persist in sin, thus eventually leading it not to salvation but to moral destruction. But the 'spirit' means the presence of the Holy Ghost, entering the soul, inspiring it with good desires, awakening a sympathy with the will of God and calling forth love in response to love; and it is this 'love' in its reciprocal action which Augustine regards as the necessary root of all goodness and virtuous living, and as being the essence, the quality of Grace. The tendency of the natural man is to love himself alone; and there is no doubt that selfishness is the primary cause of all sin. But the result of Grace poured by God upon man in his natural state is that he begins to respond by loving God. Grace is given in the form of Divine love, not because of any virtuous disposition already existing in the soul, but in order that there may be that disposition, and manifests itself in a diminution of the natural selfishness inherent in Human Nature; such diminution being caused by the exercise of love towards God,

inasmuch as love and selfishness are contrary qualities. Very soon, however, the sphere of influence of this newly awakened feeling in man becomes extended, and he begins to love other men also. The tendency of Grace is to produce the same qualities in man as it possesses itself, namely, a desire to love others, to benefit others, to be graciously disposed to others. Hence Augustine asks not only what good can we do if we do not love; but how can we fail to do good if we do love.[1] And it is certainly true that Grace under the Gospel dispensation introduced into the world a new and hitherto unheard-of relationship between man and man. It taught men the solidarity of the human race; the duty of the individual to others, not only to those with whom he comes in daily contact, but also to those whom he has never seen; in a word, it struck out of the dictionary the word 'barbarian' and substituted that of 'brother'. And the more this love towards God and man grows, the more is selfishness or cupidity eradicated, which, as has been already said, is the root of all sin, and the more does man learn to submit his will to God's will, and is enabled to do such things as are pleasing in His eyes. "Christian love", according to the definition of Dr. Mozley,[2] "is a general affection towards God and man productive of all the virtues and the whole of obedience." In this sense Grace and love may be regarded as identical terms or, as S. Paul expresses it: "Love is the fulfilling of the law".[3]

§ 13.

The Views of Augustine examined and criticised. His Theory of Free-will Unsatisfactory.

Such are the views of Augustine on the three great subjects of Free-will, Sin and Grace. That they contain much truth and constitute an invaluable contribution to Christian thought cannot be questioned, but in spite of this, it must be admitted that there is much in them to which exception must be taken, and that some of the criticisms of Pelagius remain unanswerable. In the first

[1] *De Gratia Christi* xxi foll.
[2] *Predestination* p. 172.
[3] Rom. xiii 10.

place, Augustine is not only inconsistent in his language about free-will, varying, as has been pointed out before, between an admission and an absolute denial of it in man as at present constituted, but his conception of freedom when he recognises such a thing is in itself a contradiction in terms. Freedom, says Augustine, is " lasting dependence on God ". By this he meant that the only way to escape from the captivity to sin in which the natural man finds himself since the Fall of Adam, and owing to which he cannot, by relying on himself, do anything but evil, is to yield himself unreservedly and continuously throughout his whole life to the saving power of the Grace of God. The virtuous man, he declared, is not independent of God. He is only independent when completely dependent on Him. This paradox may express a truth—the truth that man by his own unaided effort cannot attain to virtue, but it is no definition of freedom. On the contrary, it is directly opposed to the very meaning of the word, which can only convey the idea that man has within himself the power of taking either of two courses of action—of doing good or evil according to his pleasure and determination. Then, again, Augustine allows that in spite of the Fall men retain some sort of freedom, and yet he declares that owing to the corruption of Human Nature they cannot help doing evil. This is not real freedom. The truth is that Augustine overlooked one thing, and that is the tendency to good in Human Nature. Our inclinations are not only towards evil. There is in our nature something that answers readily and eagerly to the purpose of its Maker. " I delight in the law of God after the inward man ", says S. Paul. We must not tolerate the notion that our Human Nature, or any part of it, is an evil thing which has to be held in thrall by external influences. Human Nature, after all, is the creation of God, and can never altogether forget its beginning or cease to have its moments of inspiration. The tendency to sin is undoubtedly ever present, but there is also a corresponding tendency to seek after virtue—a tendency which manifests itself frequently in the heathen, to say nothing of materialists, rationalists and atheists, who claim to live an upright moral life without the aid of religion or of the Grace of God. *We*

are, then, naturally inclined to good as well as evil, and our moral freedom consists in the possibility of following either inclination and not in a voluntary self-movement in one direction only.

§ 14.

Augustine's Conception of Sin, as Based on the Story of Adam's Fall, to be Rejected.

On the subject of Sin, Augustine's theory is unsound, resting as it does on a mistaken exegesis of Scripture and necessitating deductions impossible to a Christian aspect of God and man. In his exposition of the important text, Rom. v 12, Augustine was led astray by the erroneous Latin version of ἐφ' ᾧ πάντες ἥμαρτον—translated by *in quo omnes peccaverunt*, and the Pelagians were more correct in rendering this *quia* or *propter quod*, for the meaning of S. Paul undoubtedly was "*because* all have sinned" and not "*in whom* all have sinned." As a result of this error Augustine was led to a series of inconsistent and unsatisfactory conclusions, whilst some features of his teaching are absolutely abhorrent to modern minds.

In the first place, in removing the origin of sin to Adam Augustine affords no help in solving the problem of sin. On the contrary, his attempted explanation involves greater difficulties than ever. Sin is inexplicable in Adam, who, *ex hypothesi*, was created good, and is far more difficult to account for in him than in his followers, for there was no predisposing cause to evil in his case, nothing to account for his open and flagrant transgression of the law of God.

Then, again, the corruption of the Human Race consequent upon Adam's Fall is, according to Augustine's theory, due to the propagation of evil, by which man inherits a vitiated nature. Thus Augustine gives Sin a place within humanity which is really Manichaean in the eternal duality which it sets up. Moreover, his conception of inherited sin implies that our corruption is due to the sinfulness of concupiscence. This view not only locates evil in the flesh,

but also in a sense identifies it with the flesh. Marriage is at once condemned by it as sinful, in spite of all his attempts to defend it, and must be admitted to be the sole cause of the continued transmission of sin. *Monasticism is the only logical outcome of this theory.*

Nor can Augustine's statement that "sin is the punishment of sin" escape the charge of being at once illogical, unjust and irreverent. It is illogical because not only does it fail to explain the first sin, but it creates a chain of cause and effect which must necessarily be endless and irremediable. It is unjust because the punishment falls on innocent heads. Man is compelled to sin, and will be punished for undergoing his own punishment. And it is irreverent because, by maintaining that God punishes sin with sin, it makes God responsible for sin's continuance.

Once more, Augustine admits that sin springs from the will, yet he asserts that it is for inherited sin that man will be lost. This implies that Original Sin is to be accounted more serious than wilful sin—a view which is in conflict with all sane judgement.

Again, Original Sin is a very different thing from Original Guilt. In Augustine's eyes they were synonymous or at least inseparable. Scripture and reason alike declare that one man is not responsible for another man's sin. The existence of Original Sin in some form or other has no doubt been long held by the Church, but it does not teach that the guilt of Adam's sin is imputed to his descendants and that on this ground they deserve eternal punishment. There must be a falling away on the part of the individual before he can be held responsible or in any sense guilty and deserving of punishment. Our guilt only begins when we embrace and approve the defect of our nature, when "that which was by birth our misfortune becomes by choice our fault". *Original Guilt is a feature of Augustinianism that is a shocking travesty of the Catholic Faith.*

Augustine's whole theory of sin is based upon the Adamic story. That story in its literal acceptance to-day stands discredited. The logic of Augustine has to yield to facts, and the system built up by him on so insecure a foundation must no longer be allowed to dominate theology.

§ 15.

Augustine's Theory of Grace a Valuable Contribution to Theology, but needs Correction. Grace not Irresistible. The Doctrine of Predestination a Novelty and opposed to the Vincentian Canon of Orthodoxy.

Moreover, in spite of the debt we owe to Augustine for his formulation of the doctrine of Grace, there are some parts of it which we must unhesitatingly reject. Stress need not here be laid upon the fact that his conception of the primitive state is full of inconsistencies and that his view of Grace as merely assisting Adam to do right is simply the Pelagian view, and is in flat contradiction with that set forth elsewhere by himself of Grace as an irresistible power of God overpowering and mastering the will. He was naturally handicapped when he attempted to define conditions of life in a mythological state with the same precision that one would expect in dealing with history. It is rather his fully formulated theory as applicable to all times that needs to be examined at the present day, and it must at once be stated that his doctrine of irresistible Grace cannot any longer be accepted. It would be entirely contrary to God's purpose if Grace forced men to act in a certain way apart from their deliberate choice. His object is not so much to get good actions performed as to cause upright characters to be made, and holiness under compulsion would have neither merit nor value. Grace can never take the place of man's own determination. It may sometimes do little more than merely restore a sound moral equipoise. It may sometimes, as in the case of Augustine himself, be very powerful and appear to save a man even in spite of himself, but there are lengths to which it cannot go. It would destroy the very notion of holiness if a man were not to choose holiness freely. Therefore Grace cannot in the nature of things be irresistible. Room must be left for the individual in the last resort and on each separate occasion to decide for himself by what power he will be guided, the power that makes for good or the power that makes for evil.

Then, again, in his doctrine of Predestination Augustine drew a series of conclusions from certain passages in Scripture

and stated them as absolute truths, though they were contradicted at every step by a set of parallel inferences from other statements in Scripture equally definite and equally true. We must reject the Predestination of a limited number of souls to an effectual response to the work of the Spirit and the limitation of the salvation offered. The Christian consciousness, that is, the consciousness that God is as Christ was, forbids us to assume that God is moved by favouritism, or by obscure causes beyond our ken, to visit some people with saving light while He leaves others altogether alone or only reveals Himself insufficiently. He wills that all men shall be saved. We cannot think of Him as bestowing His Grace arbitrarily, nor can we regard mankind as being divided into two clearly defined groups—the few reserved from eternity for salvation, the greater part for destruction. All the baptised are elect and predestinate, and we must regard God's Predestination as conditional, not absolute. It may be defeated by man. As we are conscious of freedom, we must never interpret God's purpose concerning us in such a way as to annihilate our own freedom.

It has already been said that though Augustine did not adopt quite so stern and relentless a Predestinarianism as found favour in the Middle Ages, yet he did incline, especially in his later works, to the doctrine of perdition, which was not the catholic doctrine of the Church. In fact, it was in special view of the Predestinarianism of Augustine and his immediate followers that Vincentius of Lerins formulated his canon of orthodoxy as that which has been held "everywhere, always and by all." The mistake made by Augustine in this respect was in regarding the antithesis to election as being logically rejection or reprobation, instead of being merely "passing by, and that perhaps only for a time".[1] The privilege of the few is for the present only conditionally theirs. The rest are to gain it through their ministry in the course of time, or, perhaps, of eternity.

[1] Mason, *Faith of the Gospel* p. 330.

CHAPTER V

SEMIPELAGIANISM

ANALYSIS

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CHAPTER V

SEMIPELAGIANISM

§ 1.

Opposition of Gallican Monks to Augustinianism. Cassian of Massilia.

The defects in the Augustinian system were not long in attracting attention, and its excessive harshness soon drew upon itself criticism from men who had little sympathy with the views of Pelagius.

They began to inquire whether the doctrine of inherited corruption and the need of a remedial Grace to restore man's fallen nature necessarily implied so harsh a doctrine as the Predestinarianism of Augustine, or whether, in his desire to emphasise the triumphs of Grace, his zeal was not carrying him a little too far. This party arose almost simultaneously in North Africa and South Gaul, but the open opposition to the views of Augustine emanated chiefly and primarily from the Gallican monks, chief of whom was John Cassian of Massilia, who enunciated his particular views in this respect in his two great works, the *Institutes* and the *Conferences*. The *Institutes*, in twelve books, were written between the years A.D. 419 and A.D. 426. The first four deal with the rules of monastic life, of which he was the first great organiser and systematiser in Europe. The remainder treat of the eight deadly sins which are hindrances to monastic perfection. The *Conferences*, written between 426 and 429, contain the substance of Cassian's conversations with the more experienced of the Eastern monks, and are of great interest even from a modern point of view.

These writings enable us to form a clear estimate of the Semipelagian position, which opposed with equal vehemence the Augustinian denial of free-will and the Pelagian depreciation of Grace. There is according to Cassian

human presumption in both these extreme views. Co-operation between the will of man and the Grace of God is the key-note of his scheme. This synergistic theory was, of course, no novel view. As has been already shown, it was the generally accepted doctrine in the East, and the majority of the Latin Fathers before Augustine also inclined to it, though their language betrays some lack of clearness on the subject. But it now became a special feature of the Semipelagian system, and was insisted upon with great earnestness as opposed to Augustine's stern monergistic view of Grace.

Unlike Pelagius, whose opinions he vigorously condemned,[1] Cassian admitted that the whole human race is involved in Adam's Fall,[2] and is therefore tainted with hereditary as well as with actual sin ; [3] he recognised that men are by nature inclined to evil ; that their wills need to be prevented by the Grace of God, and that no man is sufficient of himself to complete any good work. But though he acknowledged that the first call to salvation sometimes comes to the unwilling [4] and is the direct result of prevenient Grace, as in the case of Matthew and Paul,[5] he yet held that ordinarily Grace depends on the working of a man's own will, instancing Zacchaeus and the penitent thief.[6] Man's nature, he asserted, is provided at the outset with the seeds of virtue,[7] which of themselves tend to bring forth good fruit. The function of Grace is to water them, and in that sense Grace is necessary to their development. This Grace is given to all alike, and is given gratuitously, inasmuch as Christ died for all.[8] Indeed, Cassian went so far as to say that the benefit of Christ's death extends even to those who were never baptised, and that God takes into account the natural tendency towards good and the readiness to believe of those who are not in this life definitely made His members. Grace, therefore, according to Cassian, operates by working with man's will and endeavour. It

[1] See his *De Incarnatione Christi* Bk. i 3, and v 2.
[2] *Conf.* xxiii 11. [3] Ib. xxiii 16. [4] Ib. xiii 13-18.
[5] Ib. xiii 11, 12. [6] Ib. xiii 13.
[7] Cf. Chrysostom Hom. 2 *in Ep. ad Ephes.*, ὁρᾷς ὅτι πρὸς τὴν ἀρετὴν ἔχομεν ἀπό τῆς φύσεως σπέρματα ; τὰ δὲ τῆς κακίας παρὰ φύσιν ἐστίν.
[8] Prosper apud Aug. Ep. 224, 6.

may be lost and it may be retained by man's free-will, and not by any God-sent gift of perseverance.[1] Thus, he acknowledged the reality of Grace and admitted its necessity to the work of restoring and assisting Human Nature, and he even admitted that it must be 'prevenient' if the operation of man's will is to result in the performance of good deeds,[2] but he denied that it was either irresistible in its working or that it was limited to a fixed number of persons who were specially selected and were assured of final perseverance. Such a belief was to his mind both unscriptural, as falsifying the purpose of the death of Christ, and a departure from the older theology and even from the early teaching of Augustine himself.

Furthermore, Cassian rejected the idea of an absolute Predestination on the ground that it also was non-catholic and unsupported by antiquity, and that it was, in addition, subversive of all incentive to effort, encouraging either carelessness or despair. He was not averse from recognising a Predestination contingent upon foreseen merits and perseverance, but he protested against the general and indiscriminate teaching of the doctrine of Predestination in any form, inasmuch as the preaching of it might do harm, whereas its omission could hurt nobody.[3]

§ 2.

Rise of Semipelagianism. Prosper and Hilary. Controversy between Massilians and Augustine.

These views rapidly spread, and were held generally by the clergy of Southern Gaul, who thus formed themselves into a middle party between the Pelagians and the Augustinians. To this party the name of Semipelagian was given, though they never called themselves by that name, having disowned all sympathy with the Pelagians and being closer in thought to those of the Augustinians who held a more moderate position than that of the majority of Augustine's followers. Their opponents, however, refused to admit this, and unfairly classed them with the Pelagian school. Accordingly, two laymen of Aquitania, named Prosper and

[1] Cassian *Conf.* xiii 11, 13, 18.
[2] Aug. *De Praedes.* 2; *De Dono Persev.* 41.
[3] Prosper apud Aug. Ep. 226 iii.

Hilary, both zealous followers of Augustine, wrote to that bishop giving an account of these opinions which were becoming prevalent in Gaul, and asked him to deal with them. Thereupon Augustine wrote two treatises called *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* and *De Dono Perseverantiae.* In the first of these two books he admitted the great and radical difference between the Pelagians and his present opponents, of whom he spoke with great respect as brethren whose views on the subject of Grace were on the whole sound and catholic,[1] and who were only wrong in thinking that the beginning of faith came from unassisted free-will.[2] Predestination was not, he urged, based upon foreseen merit,[3] and he repeats a favourite statement of his, namely, that men are chosen not because they believe, nor because God knows beforehand that they will believe, but in order that they may believe.[4] He meets, but in a somewhat unsatisfactory way, the charge of novelty by declaring that the silence of the Early Fathers on the subject is due to the cursory manner in which they treat the question of Grace. Thus he confuses the issue by ignoring the fact that the charge was particularly made against the doctrine of Predestination.[5]

In the second book he insists on the view that perseverance is a gift of God, declaring that the reason why it is granted to some and not to others is unfathomable.[6] He again asserts that election and rejection are arbitrary, but he recommends that care be taken in dealing with this difficult subject before general congregations.[7]

These treatises by no means allayed the controversy or set at rest the real doubts and reasonable objections of the South Gallican Church. On the contrary, the direct assertion of the overmastering and controlling power of Grace and the statement that salvation was not really within the reach of all Christians caused the so-called Semipelagian views to spread rapidly and to gain a firm hold in the towns of Southern Gaul. The opinions of Augustine, however, were zealously upheld and championed by Prosper,

[1] *De Praed. Sanct.* ii 25.
[2] Ib. 7. [3] Ib. 30. [4] Ib. 34. [5] Ib. 27.
[6] *De Dono Persev.* 1, 21, 30, 35. [7] Ib. 58.

who threw himself heart and soul into the controversy and attacked the Massilians vehemently in letters, in treatises, and even in poems.[1] At this juncture Augustine died, and his death was the signal for renewed activity on the part of the Gallican school. A list of sixteen objections [2] to the teaching of Augustine was put forth by a certain Vincentius, whose identity with the author of the famous *Commonitorium*, then living in the Isle of Lerins, seems now to be fairly established.[3] These *Objectiones Vincentianae* were answered carefully and in great detail by Prosper, who, together with Hilary, proceeded to Rome in order to lay the matter before Celestine, and to complain of the connivance of the bishops of Southern Gaul at this teaching on the part of their clergy as a slight on the memory of Augustine.

Celestine accordingly addressed a letter [4] to the bishops of Southern Gaul, in which he censured them for ignoring an error in which their very silence made them partakers, and eulogised Augustine as one who had ever been regarded as a great teacher and a holy man, charging them as follows : " Rebuke these people ; restrain their liberty of preaching. If the case be so, let novelty cease to assail antiquity, let restlessness cease to disturb the Church's peace ".[5] This letter, however, was converted by the Semipelagians into a weapon for their own defence. " Who are the introducers of novelty ? " they ask. " Not the Massilians, for they appeal, as is well known, to antiquity, but the followers of Augustine themselves. The novelty which must be repressed is Augustinianism. The teaching of antiquity which must continue is the catholic teaching of the party attacked by Prosper."

Failing, therefore, to suppress Semipelagianism by authority, Prosper now undertook to criticise the teaching of Cassian with his own pen, and wrote a book *Against*

[1] *Carmen de Ingratis*, an extraordinary poem of a thousand lines.

[2] Known to us only by the reply of Prosper, to be found in the Appendix to vol. x of the Benedictine Edition of S. Augustine's works.

[3] See H. Koch, *Vincenz von Lerin und Gennadius*, Leipzig, 1907.

[4] This letter is No. 21 among the letters of Celestine in Migne, *Patr. Lat.* vol. 50, 528.

[5] See Vincentius' treatment of this letter, *Commonitorium* ch. 32

the Author of the Conferences (*Contra Collatorem*), in which, hoping to enlist the sympathies of Celestine's successor, Sixtus III, he points out the inconsistency of Cassian, who at one time ascribes even the beginnings of good desire to God and at another declares that some approach Him by their own unaided will.

Prosper defeated his own purpose by emphasising those features of Augustine's teaching which had already been received with such disfavour, for he exaggerated the extent of inherited corruption and exalted the power of Grace at the expense of human freedom, ignoring or explaining away all texts which opposed his theory. Soon after this, however, he disappears from the scene, and is supposed to have gone to Rome as secretary to the new Pope.

§ 3.

Lerins the Stronghold of Semipelagianism. Views of Faustus.

Semipelagianism continued to flourish in Gaul, chiefly owing to the influence of the great monastery of Lerins, which was illustrious from the fifth century onwards as the home of some of the most famous saints and scholars of the age. It is a well-known fact that this monastery was a stronghold of Semipelagianism. Indeed, as M. Ampère says,[1] the leading champions of that school of thought came from this abbey. The writer of the *Commonitorium*, Vincentius, who died in 450, himself inclined towards Semipelagian views, and Faustus, the abbot of the monastery at the time this treatise was written, viz. 434, and who was elected Bishop of Riez in 460, not only held the same opinions but played no inconsiderable part in the ensuing controversy. He himself claimed that he pursued the middle path,[2] neither ascribing, like Pelagius, too much to human liberty nor, like Augustine, too little. He was a very stern and uncompromising adversary of Pelagius, whom he styled "pestifer doctor,"[3] but he was equally definite

[1] *L'Histoire littéraire de la France*, vol. ii pp. 23–28. See also Fauriel, *Histoire de la Gaule Méridionale*, vol. i p. 404; Guizot, *Histoire de la civilisation en France*, vol. i p. 121; and Neander, *Church History*, vol. iv 399.

[2] *Ep. ad Lucidum.*

[3] *De Gratia* Bk. i ch. 1.

in his views on the subject of Predestination, which he stigmatised as "blasphemous, erroneous, heathen, fatalistic and immoral."

The attitude of Faustus towards Augustine's teaching is clearly revealed in his controversy with a presbyter named Lucidus, who held predestinarian views, and whom, failing to convince by other means, he cited to appear before a Council at Arles in 475. Here he extracted from him a confession that human exertion as well as Divine Grace is necessary to enable a man to do what is right, and to attain to salvation. The acts of this Council are now lost, but the statement which Faustus submitted to Lucidus for his signature is still extant.[1] From this statement it appears that Lucidus was persuaded to repudiate all views which favoured Predestination or seemed to compromise the universality of salvation. Amongst these the following three propositions were specially reprobated: (1) That in the foreknowledge of God a man may be predestined to eternal death; (2) that a man made as a vessel unto dishonour can never become a vessel unto honour; and (3) that Christ did not die for all, and does not desire that all should be saved.

Faustus was subsequently requested by the members of the Council to write a fuller exposition of their views and a complete refutation of the predestinarian opinions therein condemned. This he did in a work in two books entitled *Grace and Free-will*, in which he maintained that God has implanted in man an indestructible germ or spark[2] of good, which, if cherished and nurtured, will co-operate with the will of God and become efficacious for salvation. This implies that Faustus must be definitely regarded as an upholder of the doctrine of the necessity for human effort and as an opponent of the doctrine of irresistible Grace. In his view of the necessary co-operation of the human will (co-operatio voluntatis humanae) with the Divine Grace, he sides with Cassian, but endeavours to avoid any exaggeration or overstatement. He admits that free-will has been weakened

[1] Migne, *Patr. Lat.* liii 681.

[2] *De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio* Bk. i ch. 1: Hic in homine ignis interior a Deo insitus et ab homine cum Dei gratia nutritus operatur.

by sin,[1] and that it cannot attain to salvation apart from the Grace of God, but at the same time he is careful to safeguard human responsibility.

It is thus seen that Faustus took up a position midway between Augustine's theory of the total depravity and disability of Human Nature on the one hand, and the Pelagian doctrine of the absolute power of the will on the other, and that he was equally opposed to those who extolled Divine Grace at the expense of human exertion on the ground that the will had been altogether destroyed, and to those who ascribed too much to man's power, and by minimising his weakness to do any good thing were guilty of underrating his need of Grace.

This treatise found great favour in Gaul, and a subsequent Council of Lyons asked Faustus to enlarge it, so that it went forth with a certain measure of official sanction.[2] The result was that, in spite of one or two dissentient voices and written protests,[3] this work was so widely read that it even found its way to Constantinople, where it caused no small stir.

Faustus died about 491, and though soon after his death Gelasius of Rome issued a decretal letter condemning his writings, he was in his own country for ages celebrated as a saint.[4]

§ 4.

Caesarius and the Council at Arausio. Articles of the Council directed not against Semipelagianism but against its Errors.

Semipelagianism had now become the recognised doctrine of Southern Gaul, and it was not until the time of Caesarius that opposition to these views asserted itself strongly enough to gain a hearing among the Gallican bishops. Strangely enough, Caesarius, to whom the official condemnation of these views was due, came himself from the stronghold of Semipelagian opinions, Lerins, and he only succeeded in securing that condemnation by carefully modifying and

[1] *De Gratia et Lib. Arbit.* Bk. i ch. 9.

[2] See Tillemont, *Mémoires* xvi 424–5. He endeavours, however, to minimise this stamp of authority on the part of the Church of Gaul.

[3] Avitus of Vienne wrote against this treatise (Tillm. *Mém.* xvi 426).

[4] Faustus bears the title of saint in the *Patrologia*.

mitigating such parts of the Augustinian system as had already encountered grave disapproval and dislike.

Caesarius became Bishop of Arles in 501, and very soon endeared himself to his people, by whom he was venerated alike for the saintliness of his character, his wisdom and the excellence of his administrative ability. Being, in spite of his early life at Lerins, a disciple of Augustine and borrowing largely from his views and sermons, he set himself in opposition to the prevalent Semipelagian opinions of his country. But though he loved what he called "the catholic sentiments of Augustine," [1] he had no sympathy with his extreme views and strongly protested against the doctrine of Predestination to evil.

To settle the controversy finally, he summoned a Council at Arausio (Orange) in A.D. 529, where a series of twenty-five doctrinal articles were laid before the assembly, composed of thirteen bishops and seven illustrious laymen. In these articles all that might be regarded as offensive in the teaching of Augustine was carefully excluded. Predestination to evil was utterly condemned, and it was definitely laid down that sufficient Grace is bestowed upon all the baptised. This is, of course, directly contrary to the theory of irresistible Grace and absolute decrees. It is interesting to observe that these articles were not drawn up in Gaul, nor were they formulated by Caesarius himself. They had been sent to Caesarius by Felix IV of Rome, and were based on the works of Augustine and Prosper. The reticence displayed by these articles on the subject of Predestination is very significant, since it shows that, in spite of the importance attached to this doctrine by Augustine, a mediating theology was gradually growing up even in the Church of Rome.

The first two articles merely assert the doctrine of the Fall and the transmission to posterity of the evil result of Adam's sin. These are directed against Pelagianism, which denied the corruption of the human race through Adam. The next six articles deal with the subject of Grace, maintaining that owing to the weakening of our natural powers we need to be prepared by Grace before we can be cleansed

[1] Vita S. Caes. ii 33 in Migne, *Patr. Lat.* 67.

from sin or begin to believe, or do any good thing pertaining to salvation. These articles are directed against that Semipelagian view which held that the beginning of faith precedes the Grace of God, and that the latter is consequent upon a previous application on the part of the believer. The remaining seventeen articles, some of which are very brief, are occupied with an exposition of Grace in its various aspects, of its necessity for the performance of all good works, of its power to restore freedom to the will, to rescue the fallen, to exalt the saint, to impart Christian fortitude by the presence of the Spirit, and point out that it is of its essence to exclude 'boasting', being given irrespective of all merit either earned in the past or foreseen in the future.

After the articles follows a general conclusion, which states that [1] "according to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures and the definitions of the ancient Fathers, we ought with God's help to preach and believe that through the sin of the first man free-will has been so debased and enfeebled that no one can now either love God as he ought or believe in Him or do good for His sake unless prevented by the Grace of His Divine mercy. We ought therefore to believe that to Abel the Just, to Noah, and to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and to the whole multitude of the patriarchs, that illustrious faith of theirs, which the Apostle Paul praises, was not given on account of any natural good which had first been bestowed on Adam, but through the Grace of God. Now, we know and believe that since the coming of our Lord this Grace may also be possessed by all who desire to be baptised. This Grace consisteth not in free-will, but is conferred by the bounty of Christ, according to what has been already often said and according to what the Apostle Paul preaches: 'To you it hath been granted in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer in His behalf': and again, 'God who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of our Lord Jesus Christ'; and again, 'By Grace have ye been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift

[1] Translated from the Acts of the Council in Bright's *Antipelagian Treatises* pp. 390–1.

of God'; and, as the Apostle says of himself: 'I have obtained mercy that I might be faithful' (he did not say 'because I was,' but 'that I might be'); and again, 'What hast thou that thou didst not receive?' and again, 'Every good gift and every perfect boon is from above, coming down from the Father of lights'; and again, 'A man has nothing good unless it have been given him from heaven.'[1] There are innumerable testimonies from the Holy Scriptures which can be produced to prove the need of Grace, but they have been omitted for the sake of brevity, and because 'he who is unbelieving in that which is least will be unbelieving also in much'."

This insistence upon the need and reality of Grace concludes with an important modification, added, one may suppose, in order to prevent it being assumed that the assertion of Grace was in any degree subversive of the doctrine of liberty as set forth in the body of the articles instead of merely expressing a complimentary truth. This concluding summary, with its bold preference of duty to theory, might well have closed the door against extreme Augustinianism for ever. It runs as follows:

"This also according to the catholic faith do we believe, that all the baptised, by the Grace received through baptism, can and ought to perform with the help and co-operation of Christ all things that appertain to the salvation of their souls, if they are willing to labour in faith. Moreover, that some men are predestined by Divine power to evil, we not only do not believe, but also, if there are any who are willing to believe so evil a thing, against such we do with all abhorrence pronounce an anathema. This also we profess and believe as we are bound to do, that in every good work it is not we who begin and are afterwards aided by the mercy of God, but that He Himself, without any preceding merit on our part, inspires us with the faith and love of Him in order that we may faithfully sue for the sacrament of baptism, and after baptism may be able with His help to do those things which are pleasing to Him. Wherefore we must clearly believe that the admirable faith of the robber

[1] These, it is to be noticed, are some of the texts constantly quoted by Augustine in support of his views.

whom the Lord invited to His own land of Paradise, and that of the centurion Cornelius to whom the angel of the Lord was sent, and that of Zacchaeus who earned the privilege of entertaining the Lord Himself, did not come by nature but was the gift of Divine bounty."

Such were the decisions of the Council of Orange under Caesarius, remarkable alike for their good sense and for their studied moderation. Indeed, so important did Caesarius regard them that he invited the laymen present at the Council to sign the document after the assembled bishops had affixed their names, and then sent it to Rome to receive the Papal sanction. It was ratified by Boniface II in the following year in a letter[1] declaring the formulary of the Council of Orange to be agreeable to the catholic rules of the Fathers, and expressing the hope that all who dissented from the sound doctrine therein contained would themselves soon be the recipients of the Divine gift of goodwill.

This Council is generally regarded as having pronounced the final condemnation of Semipelagianism, and there are those who consider the question to be thereby closed, but it is important to observe that the Council condemned not Semipelagianism itself, but the errors of Semipelagianism —a very different matter. Not only does the formulary refrain from any direct reference to the Semipelagian party, or from a wholesale condemnation of their views, but itself expresses opinions which were in some respects of a Semipelagian tendency. For example, the definite assertion that all baptised persons might be saved if they chose is directly contrary to the spirit of Augustine's system, and the doctrine of prevenient Grace, the denial of which was the main error reprobated by the Council, was acknowledged by many Semipelagians even before the Council met.[2]

§ 5.

Prevenient Grace regarded as "Initium Salutis". The Real Meaning of Prevenient Grace.

Semipelagianism was by no means suppressed in the West as a result of this Council. The *Conferences* of Cassian

[1] Migne, *Patr. Lat.* lxv 31.
[2] Cf. Faustus *De Grat. et Lib. Arb.* i 9.

lost none of their popularity, and what might perhaps be described as a modified Semipelagianism continued to prevail even in monasteries where the opinions of Augustine were openly professed. In fact, Semipelagian views have continued to be held up to the present day, and though at certain times they have assumed more definite form than at others and have been branded with distinctive names, such as Arminianism, yet there is now a widespread feeling that they are nearer to catholic truth than are the opposite views, which have been responsible for much that is harsh and unlovely in Latin Christianity.

How, then, is the charge against Semipelagianism to be answered when it is urged that it denied the necessity of Grace as prevenient to the first motions of conversion in man?

Two problems here present themselves for consideration. First, what is the exact meaning of prevenient Grace, which catholic doctrine maintains to be essential for salvation,[1] and secondly, how far did Semipelagianism deny the necessity of this Grace?

First, let it be remembered that Grace is simply the action of the Holy Spirit which works unseen in the heart of man. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth. So is everyone that is born of the Spirit." Nor is the operation of the Holy Spirit within man capable of being accurately measured. "He giveth not His Holy Spirit by measure", so that it is impossible to assert that Grace is granted in a greater degree to one man than to another, or at one time rather than at another. Therefore any attempts made to compare the measure of Grace given before baptism with that given after baptism, or the measure of Grace given to man without being sought with that which is given in answer to man's earnest entreaty, and so forth, must of necessity be futile. But with this warning borne in mind, certain observations may be made which tend towards a solution of the problem.

[1] The doctrine of prevenient Grace finds expression in the tenth Article of the Church of England, and in two Collects, that for Easter Day and the one commencing: "Prevent us, O Lord," both of which are translated from Latin Collects of the seventh or eighth century.

The performance of any action implies two things—it implies the will to do that action, however aroused, and it also implies the power to carry the action into effect. These two functions are separable—we may have the will without the power, we may have the power without the will. In the case of doing what is right, we have not the power. The teaching of Scripture agrees with the experience of life in declaring that man, unaided by Grace, cannot supply the adequate power, cannot, apart from Grace, do either the things that he would or the things that are pleasing to God. Grace supplies power—this is acknowledged by all, and should have been acknowledged by Pelagius.

Does Grace also supply will in the same sense that it supplies power? This is the real question, and it is a question which, however it be answered, cannot be answered without peril. The will is the man, and to take it away from the man is not merely to deprive him of his human dignity, but to relieve him of his human responsibility. On the other hand, the will is sore let and hindered by the natural promptings of selfishness and by the spontaneous solicitation of the passions inherent in man's nature. But if man is to be moral at all, the decision must be his decision, the choice must be his choice. But as his choice is influenced from below in one direction, so it may be influenced from above in another direction. Must we not say that, apart from this influence from above, man is incapable of choosing the right, just as apart from the influence from below he would be incapable of choosing the wrong? The will to do right must be aroused. A call is necessary before man can turn to righteousness as the longing of his soul and seek after God. This call is what is understood by 'prevenient Grace'. Mere knowledge of right and wrong does not suffice to make men desire right in preference to wrong. It supplies no motive. It does not alter the inherent tendency of man to satisfy his selfish desires and to sin. This is seen at once by a comparison of the child of Christian parents with the child of the uninstructed savage. The one turns to evil as instinctively as the other. And even in the instructed adult, as Augustine rightly points

out,[1] the knowledge of the law only makes the natural man, out of sheer perverseness, more determined to violate it. Hence the limitation of prevenient Grace to an external gift, namely, the preaching of the Gospel, is inadequate and Pelagian. Free choice is certainly useless unless a man knows the way of truth, but knowing the way of truth is in its turn useless without the influence of the Holy Spirit to enable him to love it and to desire to follow it.

§ 6.

THREE PROPOSITIONS CONCERNING PREVENIENT GRACE.

The beginning of salvation, then, does not come from man, but God. It is a Divine call to love the way of righteousness and to hate sin, a call which comes to man after the knowledge of the truth has been obtained and is the direct result of the working of the Holy Spirit within the heart of man.

The error into which Augustine fell with regard to the commencement of faith in the individual was that he did not lay enough stress on or allow sufficient importance to the human element and to the part played by man himself in the work of salvation. Accordingly, three propositions with regard to the nature of prevenient Grace may here be laid down, which, although not in agreement with the theory of Augustine, seem nevertheless to be demanded by common sense and to be established by the evangelical declaration of the accountability of man, i.e. his power and obligation to will to do that which is right and to shun that which is evil and perverse.

The first proposition is that prevenient Grace is universal. God wills earnestly the salvation of all, and, inasmuch as Christ died for all, God gives to each man at the outset of his life that measure of Grace and help which, if supported by free-will, will lead him to salvation.

The assertion of Augustine that prevenient Grace was given to a certain number chosen for that purpose by God, and not to all men, impugns the righteousness of God and destroys our conception of justice at its very source, for man's idea of justice can only be derived from and based

[1] *De Spiritu et Littera.*

on that quality as seen in God. This violation of the principle of equity cannot be explained by any of the reasons which have been variously assigned for the partiality of an eclectic gift of prevenient Grace. Some have maintained that God need not have given Grace to any man, and the fact that He gives it to some is a gratuitous favour on His part, bestowed in order that His mercy might be known unto men. Others have urged that those to whom prevenient Grace has been given have received it for some foreseen merit, or because it was known beforehand that they would use it aright. It has also been said that God's reason for giving prevenient Grace to some and not to others rests in the secret counsels of God, and is therefore inscrutable and unfathomable by man. None of these explanations, however, can now be accepted, and the only theory possible, the only sound and catholic doctrine, is the one which makes the gift of prevenient Grace impartial and universal. Indeed, the fact that Augustinianism was not a universalist doctrine was its gravest defect, and every attempt to make it so, or to combine it with a doctrine of universality,[1] failed, and was bound to fail, because Augustine's conception of election could fit in with no scheme which threw open the door of salvation freely to all men. If a man argues that prevenient Grace implies from its nature a certain measure of favouritism, it is because he has a Deistic conception of God's transcendence and no conception of His immanence. Prevenient Grace is present to all, and this in virtue of the essential relation of man to God. True, it is only known by those who accept it, but it is there, and there is no one to whom it is not offered. There is no favouritism with God.

The second proposition is that prevenient Grace is not irresistible. That doctrine which regards Grace as being irresistible at any stage of a man's life must on many grounds be rejected. Not only does such a theory render everything affecting faith vague and uncertain, even to the believer,

[1] Such an attempt was made by the unknown author of the treatise entitled *De Vocatione Omnium Gentium*, which ineffectually endeavoured to combine the doctrine of the exclusive efficacy of Divine Grace with a recognition of the universality of God's purpose of salvation. This work is included among the works of Prosper and Leo.

inasmuch as it necessarily lies outside the domain of experience, but it leads to a determinism conflicting with the Gospel and with the universal sense of individual freedom. It is useless to exhort, to pray for, or to reprimand sinners. Human effort and good works are thereby discouraged, because in any case they can make no difference and cannot alter the predetermined issue. In short, the doctrine of irresistible Grace, however explained, cannot escape the charge of fatalism, and must lead either to dull resignation or to despair. It destroys man to exalt God.

Moreover, if prevenient Grace be universal, it cannot be irresistible. Irresistible Grace could only be maintained in the case of the favoured few who are destined to persevere to the end, and who, in spite of all lapses, are to be brought finally to a state of perfection. But if prevenient Grace be given in equal degree to all, as equity demands, the fact that some through their own fault fail to attain salvation causes the thesis of a prevenient Grace which is at the same time irresistible to break down on the very threshold. The truth is that, though God wills all men to be saved, He imposes salvation as a necessity on none.

The third proposition is that prevenient Grace is powerless to produce any result unless it be followed by voluntary effort on man's part.

The prevenient Grace of the initial call follows immediately after the awakening of the intellectual sense of right and wrong by a knowledge of the law, and gives to man the first impetus in the right direction, the first feeling of love for God and the desire to do right. But in order to become operative, prevenient Grace must meet with a response on man's part. He must meet God half-way. As a result of the Divine 'vocatio' he must begin not only to will to do right and to fulfil the law of God, the existence of which he has already learnt, but he must also "ask and seek and knock" in order to obtain a continuance of that Grace which is to work with him and assist him in his pursuit of holiness. This co-operation of free-will with prevenient Grace is a factor of vital importance. In fact, it may be declared to contain the key to the whole problem. God has given man a free will, and, however weakened that

free will may have become, it cannot be destroyed. Nor can its existence be neglected. Whatever measure of Grace is given by God to man at the outset of his life, it calls for and demands an equal and corresponding effort on man's side, without which it is powerless to effect his salvation. Any exaggeration of the importance of either of these two elements, the slightest disturbance of the equilibrium, leads to heresy, and makes man's will all-sufficient or makes God's Grace overmaster man's will altogether. If Grace be too powerful, then God is destroying His own work. He is obliterating man's free-will, and reducing him to the level of a beast or a plant. If man's will is all-sufficient to effect his salvation, prevenient Grace is superfluous and the work of the Holy Spirit is rendered null and void.

Prevenient Grace is not to be confused with co-operative Grace, which is given in answer to prayer after the work of salvation has begun, yet the doctrine of co-operation applies to the one as much as to the other. The difference is that in the case of co-operative Grace man's will and effort work side by side with it, while in the case of prevenient Grace they follow it. But in either case the doctrine of perfect co-operation between the Holy Spirit and the individual in whom He works not only avoids the Pelagian error of minimising the power of Grace, but it gives full force to the responsibility and accountability of man.

This aspect of Grace enables us to assign to the right source the blame for all failure to do right. When a man does wrong, it is due not to insufficiency of Grace but to insufficiency of will: if he fails to attain salvation, it is his part of the combined action of Grace and free-will that is lacking. The fault lies with him and not with God.

§ 7.

Relation of Prevenient Grace to Baptism.

One other point remains to be considered, and that is the relation of prevenient Grace to baptism. How far is this doctrine affected by, or opposed to, the sacramental view of Grace?

On this subject a certain amount of inconsistency is found. Augustine, as has been already seen, emphasised

the fact that the spiritual life of man is begun, continued and ended in Grace, that Grace even anticipates baptism, and that man is led by Grace to seek it. The case of the Ethiopian Eunuch is a Biblical illustration of this truth. The followers of Augustine, on the other hand, exalted the sacrament of baptism as the source of all Grace, regarding it, as Harnack says,[1] almost as a magical miracle. And in course of time this aspect of baptism became more and more the popular doctrine. Indeed, the sacramental view of Grace became the recognised view through the Middle Ages. A similar inconsistency is observed in the Canons of the Council of Orange. At one moment we read that the power of choice residing in the will, which was weakened in the first man, cannot be repaired except by the Grace of baptism,[2] at another that the state of believing by which we attain the regeneration of Holy Baptism is brought about through the gift of Grace.[3] In several places Grace is spoken of as an inner process anticipating every natural effort and every motion of righteousness, and yet underlying all this is the external conception of Grace as the gift of baptism alone.[4]

This inconsistency is due to a somewhat natural confusion in the application of the term Grace. All working of the Holy Spirit in the heart of man is Grace, but the Grace consisting in the initial call—that "inspiration of the Holy Spirit which repairs our will from unbelief to faith",[5] and to which the name prevenient Grace is given, effects nothing more than the origination of the desire to do right. Man is led by it to love God, to believe in Him, to serve Him and to desire to please Him, but it does not aid him in his efforts to attain salvation. That is the function of co-operative Grace, which is given in baptism and is continued constantly throughout life in answer to prayer. Sacra-

[1] *Hist. of Dogma* (Engl. Trans.) v 260.

[2] See Canon xiii: Arbitrium voluntatis, in primo homine infirmatum, nisi per gratiam baptismi non potest reparari.

[3] Canon v: Initium fidei quo in eum credimus qui justificat impium, et ad regenerationem sacri baptismatis pervenimus, per gratiae donum (est).

[4] Hoc etiam secundum fidem Catholicam credimus, quod accepta per baptismum gratia, omnes baptizati, Christo auxiliante et co-operante, quae ad salutem animae pertinent, possint et debeant si fideliter laborare voluerint, adimplere. Bright, *Antipelagian Treatises* p. 391.

[5] Canon v: Per inspirationem Spiritus Sancti corrigentem voluntatem nostram ab infidelitate ad fidem.

mental Grace works with man, helps his weakness and enables him to do that which prevenient Grace teaches him to long for, and which by himself he could never do.

Prevenient Grace, then, is independent of baptism. It anticipates all human endeavour, and may be described as the inspiration of faith and love; while co-operative Grace is the assistance of God's Holy Spirit, which alone enables man to carry out the good that the will desires to do.

§ 8.

Discussion of the Charge made against Semipelagians that they denied Prevenient Grace.

We now pass to a consideration of the second problem raised by the charge usually made against Semipelagianism, and proceed to investigate how far Semipelagianism denied the necessity and existence of prevenient Grace.

In order to estimate this it is essential to examine the view of Cassian, who may be regarded as the father of Semipelagianism in Gaul. The following extracts from his writings will show his position on this subject. In the *Conference* with the Abbot Daniel, Cassian points out that free-will without Grace is inadequate, and that human efforts without Grace are unavailing. Without the Grace of God, he says, "the efforts of the worker are useless".[1] In the *Conference* with Serapion it is stated that it is an impious notion and an impertinence to ascribe everything to man's own exertions. There are many passages in Scripture proving that foes cannot be overcome by man's own strength without the help of God.[2] In the *Conference* with Paphnutius, Germanus asks: "Where, then, is there room for free-will if God both begins and ends everything concerning our salvation?"[3] The answer is that the beginning and the end are not everything; there is a "middle in between". From these and many other passages it is evident that Cassian fully admitted the need of prevenient Grace. "If Christ said, 'I can of mine own self do nothing', shall we who are but dust and ashes think that 'we have no need of God's help in what pertains to our

[1] *Conf.* iv 5. [2] Ib. v 15. [3] Ib. iii 11.

salvation'?"[1] The truth is that Cassian fully realised that the will of no one, however eager to reach "the palm of righteousness", is sufficient, "unless he is protected by Divine compassion",[2] but he felt that there is always the danger of man becoming discouraged and relaxing his efforts on the ground that prevenient Grace to enable him to do right is lacking. Hence Cassian was really the first theologian to emphasise the paramount need of man's co-operation with the Grace of God. He did not go so far as to say that prevenient Grace is dependent on foreseen merit, but he went so far as to say that it is conditional upon the free self-determination of the human will,[3] by which apparently he meant that unless prevenient Grace finds an immediate response in the human heart, and is in fact met, as it were, half-way, it ceases to operate and is withdrawn. In view of the universal corruption of Human Nature, which Cassian admitted, he acknowledged that man cannot be restored to health without the physician's aid, but at least, he would say, man can desire that aid. This led him to the position that moral improvement is partly the work of man's own will—that sometimes God anticipates the desire and effort of man, as in the case of Matthew and Paul, but that sometimes the first impulse comes from man's own heart, as in the case of Zacchaeus and the penitent thief. The mistake he made here is in treating the visible part of the story of these men as if it were the whole, neglecting the fact that we are not told anything about the antecedent conditions and underlying motives of the souls of these men. The desire to be healed is itself stirred up by Grace. Moreover, there is an element of truth in Prosper's criticism of Cassian, namely, that he is proposing an inconsistent and wholly unsatisfactory theory in ascribing to God a diversity of procedure in dealing with souls, so that some are drawn to Him by prevenient Grace, while others approach Him of their own unaided will. Thus Cassian's contribution may be regarded not so much as a solution of the problem as an opening of the question.

Yet very shortly after this, the Massilian clergy as a body, if Prosper is to be believed, held definitely to the

[1] *Instit.* xii 17. [2] Ib. xii 10. [3] *Conf.* iv 4.

belief that Grace is given to none but those who strive for it, and he speaks of the phrase "asking, seeking and knocking" as one of the technical terms of the Semipelagian party, used by them of the state of mind antecedent to and necessary for the reception of Divine Grace. This is specially referred to in a letter of Prosper to Augustine,[1] which says that the Gallican clergy assert that if the decree of God anticipate human will, all effort is removed and all virtue is taken away. They teach that they can attain to the Grace by which we are new-born in Christ by natural powers, namely, by asking and seeking and knocking. In Augustine's reply this view is directly condemned. "They are wrong", he says, "who think that the impulse by which we ask and seek and knock originates with us and is not given to us." [2]

Thus before the middle of the fifth century the theory of the Semipelagians in Southern Gaul had advanced a step farther than that of Cassian. He had merely said that Grace need not be and was not always prevenient; they now asserted that it never was. This was an important and unfortunate development, for the denial of prevenient Grace became, for a time at least, the characteristic view of the Gallican theologians. This is seen by a reference made to the subject in his *Commonitorium* by Vincentius of Lerins, who, though a Semipelagian, certainly represented the most moderate party of that school of thought, in which he definitely condemns the idea of prevenience and styles men heretics who teach that Grace is given by God to men without any effort on their part, and even though they do not "ask and seek and knock".[3]

[1] Epistle ccxxv among Augustine's letters, § 3 removeri . . . omnem industriam tollique virtutes si Dei constitutio humanae praeveniat voluntates. § 4 Possit suam dirigere voluntatem atque ad hanc gratiam qua in Christo renascimur pervenire per naturalem scilicet facultatem, petendo, quaerendo, pulsando.

[2] *De Dono Perseverantiae* 64: Attendant ergo quomodo falluntur qui putant esse a nobis, non dari nobis, ut petamus, quaeramus, pulsemus. Et hoc esse dicunt, quod gratia praeceditur merito nostro, ut sequatur illa, cum accipimus petentes, et invenimus quaerentes, aperiturque pulsantibus. Nec volunt intellegere etiam hoc divini muneris esse ut oremus, hoc est petamus, quaeramus, atque pulsemus.

[3] Audent etenim polliceri et docere quod in ecclesia sua magna et specialis ac plane personalis quaedam sit dei gratia, adeo ut sine ullo labore, sine ullo studio, sine ulla industria, etiamsi nec petant nec quaerant nec pulsent,

At this period it seems as if the Semipelagians were in danger of holding as an essential part of their doctrine what was, as a matter of fact, an error based on a misconception of the real meaning of prevenient Grace. In their desire to emphasise the vital importance of human effort they lost sight of the inability of man to turn to God by his own unaided powers without the initial impartation of faith and love. This attitude was not, however, necessary for the Semipelagian position, and one notices a gradual tendency among the theologians of the more moderate Semipelagian school to recede from it even before the doctrine of prevenient Grace was asserted by the Council of Orange as a catholic truth. Faustus, for example, though in one passage he compares the case of a soul which desires to be drawn to God to that of a sick man trying to rise and asking for a helping hand,[1] admits that there is an element in the soul of man which can only be ascribed to the inspiration of God, being not merely anterior to all human effort, but even to the desire for righteousness. He declares that although after the Fall the human will lost its original power, nevertheless it was not entirely destroyed, nor completely deprived of Grace; that there is an indestructible germ and spark[2] of good implanted by God within, which, if cherished and nurtured by man, operates in him with saving effect. And a little later he declares that owing to the weakening of the will it requires Divine help to enable it to move towards good.[3] This tendency to greater moderation of statement culminated in the perfect readiness of the Gallican bishops at the Council of Orange to accept without protest the statement that man cannot, apart from Grace, think or choose by his natural powers anything good that pertains to salvation,[4] and that the beginning of faith is due not to man, but to the Grace of God.[5]

quicumque illi ad numerum suum pertinent, tamen ita divinitus dispensentur, ut angelicis evecti manibus . . . numquam possint scandalizari. *Common.* xxvi, Author's edition (Camb. Univ. Press), p. 109.

[1] *De Gratia* i 17.

[2] Ib. i 1 : Hic in homine ignis interior a Deo insitus, et ab homine cum Dei gratia nutritus operatur.

[3] Ib. i 9.

[4] *Conc. Araus.* Canon vii.

[5] Ib. Canon vi.

In any case, there is no evidence that the denial of prevenient Grace survived that Council, and the fact that it did not do so and that Semipelagianism, as has already been shown, continued to flourish, proves, if proof were needed, that the denial of prevenient Grace had no permanent or essential place in the Semipelagian position.

§ 9.

Three Inherent Characteristics of Semipelagianism.

What, then, were the features of Semipelagianism which persisted in spite of the decree of Orange, and which may for this reason be regarded as its inherent characteristics? They may be summed up as being three in number: (1) opposition to Predestinarianism; (2) insistence on the moral responsibility of man; and (3) the denial that marriage involves any violation of chastity.

Not only were these points not condemned by the Council, but the fact that they have survived in spite of the sifting and scrutiny through which in successive ages they have passed, and in spite of the hold that Augustine's name and views had upon subsequent generations, goes a long way towards establishing their truth.

The objection to the theory of absolute Predestination seems to have been the first, as it was the chief, ground of protest against Augustinianism on the part of the Church of Massilia, and it forms the starting-point from which the Semipelagian school arose. If Augustine had not laid such rigorous and unqualified emphasis on this stern and unbending doctrine, he would never have elicited from the presbyters of Gaul criticisms of which no candid mind can dispute the justice. Nor can it be urged that Augustine did not realise to what objections his theory lay open, and that, had he done so, he would have corrected, or at least modified, its severity. His reply to Prosper and Hilary is his final answer to his Massilian critics, and in the two books which form that reply he not merely restates and insists on his predestinarian theory in its entirety, but abates nothing of its intensity and sternness. He actually declares that Predestination is wholly irrespective of foreseen piety, that it is simply and literally absolute, and that

it is inexplicable save on the grounds of the inscrutable will of God. He defines Grace as an overpowering and irresistible force bestowed on some men and not on others, leaving those on whom it is bestowed no room for the exercise of will and giving them no choice but to obey: the logical conclusion of all which is that man's will is not a free will at all, but a determined will, that election and rejection are purely arbitrary, and that salvation is not really offered to all men. Augustine's reply, therefore, as Dr. Bright says, "failed to satisfy the natural doubts or to meet the real objections of the Church of Marseilles." [1] Indeed, the validity of their protest is confirmed by the attitude of the Council of Orange. Not only is there in the resolutions of that Council a most significant absence of any positive assertion respecting Predestination, but an anathema was pronounced against any—if any there be—who should hold a Predestination to evil.[2] In a word, it may be stated that the objections of the Semipelagians to the doctrine of Predestination as propounded by Augustine, based as they are on truth, reason and experience, remain unanswered and unanswerable.

§ 10.

Original Guilt and Moral Responsibility.

The question of the moral responsibility of man is intimately connected with the question of Predestination, yet, inasmuch as it involves the further question of the real meaning of guilt, it will be best to treat it separately.

First, then, let it be understood that sin and guilt are two totally different ideas, whether sin be regarded as an individual act or a universal taint. An individual act may be sinful without necessarily involving the doer in guilt. It may, for example, be committed involuntarily, or it may be committed under constraint, or it may be done in ignorance. This difference between sin and guilt is recognised by S. Paul, e.g. Rom. iv 15: "Where no law is, there is no transgression"; and v 13: "Sin is not

[1] Introduction to *Antipelagian Treatises of Augustine* p. lviii.
[2] *Conc. Araus.* concluding Summary (Bright, *Antipelagian Treatises* p. 391).

imputed when there is no law"; and also vii 8: "Without the law sin was dead". Then, again, by Original Sin is meant a universal propensity to evil; a universal taint contracted somehow which predisposes a man to do wrong even in violation of his will and against his better judgement. But this is a totally different concept from the idea of guilt, whether regarded as original or not. Guilt can only be applied to the act of an individual committed wilfully, contrary to his conscience and to his notion of what is good and right. Guilt is the meriting of punishment for wilful sin. It is the verdict of a man's own conscience passed on a voluntary violation of a universal law by one who is fully responsible and fully aware of what he is doing.

There are also degrees of guilt, so that some, we are told, will be beaten with many stripes and some with few stripes, according to the measure of their accountability. A man cannot be held accountable for something that he has not done, nor can he be regarded as responsible for something that happened before he was born.

Original Guilt is a contradiction in terms, for what is original is not guilt, and what is guilt is not original. If in place of guilt accountability be substituted, all difficulty will be avoided. Degrees of guilt are degrees of accountability, and there can be no degrees of accountability in the possession of a hereditary liability for which all are either equally responsible or equally devoid of responsibility. The doctrine of Original Guilt was, nevertheless, retained by various Protestant Churches after the Reformation, yet being, as it is, contrary to common reason, it has necessarily been abandoned by modern theology.

The great service rendered by Pelagius, who, as has been pointed out in a former chapter, began his public activity simply as a moral reformer, was his insistence on the fact of the moral responsibility of the individual. Unfortunately, he was led by his desire to uphold this truth into a false conception of sin, for he regarded each sinful act as a separate and isolated factor, with no bearing whatever upon the character of the doer. It was this denial of the existence of sinful habit and the disregard of our inability, in spite of formal freedom, to do the things we would, which

was the weakest feature of his doctrine, causing him to recognise but imperfectly the nature of individual responsibility and to interpret it as being the power and obligation of every man on all occasions to do right. This, of course, implies unqualified free-will and the possibility of sinlessness, both of which, as experience teaches, are contrary to fact.

Augustine, on the other hand, in his desire to emphasise the generic aspect of evil and the physical unity of the race, unduly minimised the responsibility of the individual. His doctrine of imputation and his confusion of Original Sin with Original Guilt led him to the impossible conclusion that the voluntary consent of a person is not an essential factor in guilt, and that all men are equally guilty. This totally disregards the will to do right and makes no difference between those who exercise that will and those who do not. In fact, as a doctrine it is subversive of all moral responsibility, and is contrary to our fundamental moral judgement, which imputes to man those sins alone for which he is personally responsible, and which recognises degrees of guilt according to the knowledge, the environment and the previous history of the sinner.

Augustine himself was not unaware of the weakness of his theory, and tried to cover it by allowing full moral responsibility to Adam and by maintaining that we were all potentially in Adam, and, indeed, were Adam, when he sinned. But this explanation, however satisfactory to Augustine with his necessary limitations in scientific knowledge, cannot be accepted by an age which regards personality as the sole sphere of sin and of virtue. The personality of Adam was his own, and was incommunicable; his nature was, it may be, communicable, but not his guilt. To participate in his nature may be to our grave disadvantage, but so far as it is this, it diminishes our guilt. Moral accountability cannot be assigned where there is no actual and conscious participation in sin.

This grave weakness which lay at the base of the whole Augustinian system was corrected by the representatives of the Semipelagian school, who refused to recognise any theory which did not secure the full and complete responsi-

bility of the individual, in view of which each man is condemned by his conscience for each individual sin as if it were his sole creation. But they did not, in shunning the error of Augustine, fall back again into the error of Pelagius. They kept in mind not only the fact of the universality of sin, but also the terrible weakening of the will wrought by sinful habit. Therefore they steered a midway course between the two extremes, and declared not only that the full and complete moral responsibility of man is a sound and catholic conception, as of course it is, but that the real meaning of moral responsibility is *not* that man has the power to do right and to abstain from sin in all circumstances, whatever his previous history may have been, but that he has the power and is morally bound to *desire* to do right and to *endeavour* to do right, however unsuccessful may be the attempt. The reason why man's conscience condemns him when he does wrong, even in the case of severe temptation, is that he has not exerted sufficient effort or yielded himself so completely to the impulse to do right as he feels he ought to have done and might have done.

§ II.

Marriage no Violation of Chastity.

The third essential feature of the Semipelagian position is the denial that marriage involves any violation of chastity.

The doctrine of the sinfulness of sexual desire arises from, and is inseparably connected with, Augustine's theory of Original Sin. His contention that the sin of Adam corrupted the whole of Human Nature, and is handed down from father to son, seemed to him to involve the view that evil is necessarily propagated by sexual intercourse. This view Augustine doubtless derived from his Manichaean days, but it remained with him till the end. The reason for this was that the Manichaean opinion of the intrinsic sinfulness of concupiscence fitted in well with his scheme of inherited sin and caused him erroneously to identify Original Sin with the natural sexual impulse. This was a great mistake on the

part of Augustine. No natural law can be in itself bad. All the bodily appetites may be perverted, but the sin lies in their abuse and not their use; and the worst feature of Augustinianism is the continual and undue attention it has drawn to the sphere of sex. This is seen in the extravagant exaltation of celibacy and in the morbid contemplation of virginity which it would impose upon the Church, laying stress upon, and continually recalling to the mind and imagination, matters of which no one wishes either to speak or to think. Unfortunately, this view of the sinfulness of the natural function of procreation was encouraged by the monastic ideal. The monks readily applauded any doctrine that depreciated marriage and exalted celibacy, and there is no doubt that it was due to monasticism that this perverse view of marriage gained so firm a hold on the mind of the Church.

To this debased view of matrimony Semipelagianism was inherently opposed. This opposition was, it is true, not realised in the early stages of Semipelagianism, and some individual Semipelagians—for example, Faustus—regarded sexual desire and marriage in almost the same light as did Augustine himself. Indeed, the attention of these early champions of Semipelagianism was monopolised upon the main and central issue, and they were naturally reluctant to widen the field of their controversy with Augustine. It may also be said that the Gallican party, in contending for what they regarded as orthodoxy, did not at first realise the whole extent of its implications nor grasp all that followed logically from their principles. The denial of the impurity of marriage was the inevitable inference from their worthier view of Human Nature, even though individual members of the school may have failed to see the logical connexion between the speculative doctrine and the practical conclusion. In opposing the Augustinian doctrine of Original Sin, the Semipelagians necessarily opposed all that followed from that doctrine by way of deduction and consequence. Their main contention on behalf of more liberal views of Human Nature, their denial of its utter corruption by the Fall, their assertion that there are in man ineradicable seeds of goodness implanted by

the generosity of his Creator,[1] could not but modify the doctrine of the evil of sin as necessarily propagated by sexual intercourse, and are logically inconsistent with the idea that all men are born of sinful lust. Therefore the Semipelagian theory is essentially opposed to the view of the impurity of marriage, and, as Harnack says: "It is quite indifferent how individual Semipelagian monks looked at sexual desire and marriage, as also whether this point came to light at once in the controversy".[2]

§ 12.

Semipelagianism an Orthodox Protest against the Novel Teaching of Augustine.

Semipelagianism, then, was in the main an orthodox protest based on traditional views against the novel teaching of Augustine's scheme of Christianity, for there is little doubt that in most of its tenets Semipelagianism represented the old and therefore catholic conception of the Church. In the points enumerated above it was, as has been shown, merely a restatement of the ancient doctrine of the Fathers, both Eastern and Western, whereas Augustinianism, though undoubtedly based on the Pauline conception of Grace, went much farther than could be justified by the statements of S. Paul, and was in many respects an absolutely new and unheard-of doctrine. But, at the same time, those features of Augustine's theory which were obviously sound and in accordance with Scripture were not rejected by the Gallican school; on the contrary, they were unhesitatingly adopted into their scheme, so that Harnack rightly says: "Semipelagianism was popular catholicism made more definite and profound by Augustine's doctrines".[3]

But in one particular Semipelagianism never was and never could be reconciled with Augustinianism, and that is in its view of Original Sin and its theory of irresistible and indefectible Grace. The latter was a purely Western doctrine which was never held nor approved of by the

[1] See Cassian *Conf.* xiii.
[2] *Hist. of Dogma* (Eng. Trans.) v 262 n.
[3] Ib. v 245 n. 3.

East, and Semipelagianism reproduced through Cassian the older and Greek tradition which he had derived from his Eastern instructors. Thus Semipelagianism, in holding a milder view of the effects of the Fall than that which has been current in the West since the time of Augustine, is found to be in accordance with the most recent thought upon this subject, and being based on the teaching of the Greek Fathers, preserves a true continuity of doctrine between antiquity and the present day.

In conclusion, be it said that we to-day owe the very greatest debt to Semipelagianism for its manly protest against Latin novelties which not only rendered mediaeval Christianity hard and coarse, but which have up to the present day been a source of great weakness to the Western Church.

CHAPTER VI

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CHAPTER VI

SCHOLASTIC AND MEDIAEVAL VIEWS OF SIN

§ 1.

Augustine's Views, though adopted by some Schoolmen, not universally accepted.

After the Council of Orange the Augustinian theory of Human Nature, though rejected in the East, became for a time the accepted doctrine of the Western Church, yet, as has been shown, Augustine's views did not meet with unqualified approval, nor were they held in their entirety even by those who professed to be his followers. The truth is that the practical part of his anthropology, namely, that part of it which dealt with the corruption of the human race and with the work of Grace in its regeneration, was received and taught by the more devout Fathers of the fifth and sixth centuries, like Leo and Gregory, and of the eighth and ninth, like Bede and Alcuin, but the speculative part, which dealt with the doctrine of Predestination, was passed over almost in silence. The efforts of the ecclesiastical authorities to mitigate the asperities of Augustine's tenets and the general decline in the desire and ability to grapple with or to grasp intellectual and speculative problems resulted in the universal acceptance of a theology so much milder in tone and so far removed from rigid Augustinianism that it became more or less identical with the Semipelagian position. In fact, Semipelagianism always appealed to a large class of minds, not only because of its apparently less speculative character and its silence with respect to the more difficult parts of the doctrines of Original Sin and free-will, but also because of its opposition to the Augustinian theory of Predestination and because of its introduction into the doctrine of regeneration of the element of human co-operation and practical effort.

But though Augustinianism was gradually displaced by the Semipelagian theory of synergistic regeneration and its milder view of inherited evil, and slumbered until the time of the Reformation, yet there were a few individuals during the scholastic period who advocated it in all its uncompromising severity. These were chiefly Gottschalk, Peter Lombard, Bede, Anselm, Bernard and Aquinas. When Augustine's views triumphed in the West, it was tacitly understood that his theory of Predestination went too far, and so the doctrine was passed over in silence by the Council of Orange. But this method of treating an unsatisfactory statement of the relation of God to man could scarcely be regarded as final, and merely postponed the consideration and settlement of the question till a later date.

§ 2.

Gottschalk (A.D. 808–69). His Predestinarian Views opposed by Hincmar at Council of Quiercy.

In the ninth century the controversy broke out anew. Gottschalk, a Gallican monk who was a devoted student of Augustine's works, was the first to bring this dark and difficult problem to the fore again by asserting the doctrine of Predestination with all the vigour and energy of which he was capable. He was, however, a man of narrow views and limited ability. After a personal experience not unlike that of Augustine himself, he vehemently asserted the doctrine of Predestination as having been his own strength and stay after a misspent life, but he entirely ignored all other essential and corresponding parts of Augustine's teaching, confining himself to that feature in which he took especial interest. In his zeal for Predestination Gottschalk went farther than the usual language permitted by the Church on this subject, which was that the righteous are predestinate but the wicked merely foreknown, and he applied the term 'predestinate' to both classes, thus introducing the theory of a *Double Predestination* (duplex praedestinatio), i.e. the theory that the doctrine of Predestination to life logically implies also a Predestination to death, and this became the main point

of contention in the controversy. The following five heads embrace Gottschalk's chief doctrinal statements:

(1) Before all ages and before God made anything, He predestined to life everlasting those whom He willed, and those whom He willed He predestined to destruction.

(2) Those who are predestined to destruction cannot be saved, and those who are predestined to life everlasting cannot perish.

(3) God does not will all men to be saved, but only those who are in the way of salvation; and when the Apostle says "Who willeth all men to be saved", he means all those, and only those, who are in the way of salvation.

(4) Christ did not come to save all men, nor did He suffer for all, but for those only who are placed in the way of salvation by the mystery of His passion.

(5) After the Fall of the first man by his own free-will, no one of us can use his free-will to do well, but only to do evil.[1]

The controversy was taken up and conducted by Hincmar, Archbishop of Rheims, on the one side, and by Remigius, Archbishop of Lyons, on the other, and though it raged vehemently for two years (849–50) the result was far from being satisfactory or conclusive, partly because, owing to the then weak state of theological and metaphysical science, the disputants failed to get to the root of the matter and were content with a merely verbal discussion, and partly because the Gallican Semipelagians

[1] (1) Ante omnia saecula et antequam quicquam faceret a principio Deus quos voluit praedestinavit ad regnum, et quos voluit praedestinavit ad interitum.

(2) Qui praedestinati sunt ad interitum salvari non possunt, et qui praedestinati sunt ad regnum perire non possunt.

(3) Deus non vult omnes homines salvos fieri, sed eos tantum qui salvantur: et quod dicit Apostolus "Qui vult omnes homines salvos fieri", illos dicit omnes qui tantummodo salvantur.

(4) Christus non venit ut omnes salvaret; nec passus est pro omnibus, nisi solummodo pro his qui passionis eius salvantur mysterio.

(5) Postquam primus homo libero arbitrio cecidit, nemo nostrum ad bene agendum sed tantummodo ad male agendum libero potest uti arbitrio.

were just as reluctant to make concessions in regard to a doctrine which had caused such offence in the past, and about which the Councils had been silent, as the Augustinians were reluctant to alter their phraseology or to abate one iota from the severity of their views. Hence, as Mozley says,[1] this controversy does not offer much valuable material to the theological student. One thing, however, it brought to the fore, for, though it cannot be said to have settled the point satisfactorily, it did at least draw the attention of the Church to the question whether Predestination ought to be applied to the punishment of the wicked and whether men can rightly be said to be predestinated to death.

In 849 Hincmar brought Gottschalk before a Council at Quiercy, which condemned his opinions and issued a counter-statement of doctrine confining Predestination to goodness, and maintaining that where evil is concerned there is only foreknowledge on the part of God. Thus a Predestination to life was admitted, but a Predestination to punishment was denied. A distinction was drawn by Hincmar between leaving man in his sinful state, of which punishment will be the inevitable consequence, and predestining him to that punishment.

§ 3.

Scotus Erigena and the Second Council of Quiercy.

The only attempt at scientific argument and the only solid contribution to theological thought in this controversy came from Scotus Erigena, who, on the invitation of Hincmar, entered the lists and wrote a book against Gottschalk and his partisans. In this treatise he took his stand on Neoplatonic philosophy, and argued that no distinction can be drawn between Predestination and foreknowledge, that they are one and the same thing, and that with God they could not be otherwise than identical, but that they relate only to good and not to evil, this being merely a negation. God cannot foresee nor ordain a thing which has no existence. Sin, as Augustine him-

[1] *Predestination* p. 234 n.

self had taught, is merely the defect of righteousness, and punishment is the defect of bliss; therefore there can be no Predestination to or foreknowledge of these negations. In this way Scotus denied on scientific grounds the double Predestination advocated by Gottschalk and Remigius.

A second Council at Quiercy in 853 issued four decrees almost Semipelagian in tone, rejecting a double Predestination and maintaining the complete restoration of free-will through the Grace of Christ. The substance of the decrees is as follows: That man fell by the misuse of his free-will; that God by His foreknowledge chose some whom by His Grace He predestined to life and life to them; that as for those whom He by righteous judgement left in their lost estate, He did not predestine them to perish, but only predestined their sin to be punished; that free-will was lost by the Fall, but was recovered through Christ; that there is a free-will to good, if aided and prevented by Grace, as well as a free-will to evil, if deserted by Grace; and that, lastly, God would have all men to be saved, and that Christ suffered for all, so that the perdition of those who perish is due to their own fault alone.

Though this Council under the direction of Hincmar inserted a special clause[1] to the effect that only a single Predestination is to be spoken of, relating either to the gift of Grace or to the retribution of justice, yet a little later we find Hincmar himself writing a treatise in which he admitted a double Predestination in the sense that while the righteous are predestined to life and it to them, punishment is predestined to the reprobate, but they are not predestined to it. They are merely forsaken by God. With this work the controversy ceased, and Gottschalk, after much ill treatment, died in prison in 869, clinging to the last to the doctrine of Predestination to death, although it was now condemned as heretical. From this point the Latin Church, though holding the name of Augustine in high respect, lapsed generally, with one or two notable exceptions, into a Semipelagian position.

[1] Conc. Carisiac. II, A.D. 853, c. i.

§ 4.

Anselm (A.D. 1093–1109). Attempt to found a 'Natural Theology'.

Not until the eleventh century was any positive contribution made towards a defence of the somewhat discredited Augustinian anthropology, and for this we turn to Anselm, who was archbishop of the then insignificant see of Canterbury. Since the time of Augustine himself the Church had produced no teacher of such eminence and power as Anselm, or one whose influence on later ages has been so great. He has been described as the founder of 'natural theology', by which we must understand a theology which attempted to support orthodoxy by the aid of philosophic thought. It is advisable to summarise as briefly as possible Anselm's attempts towards a metaphysical solution of the difficult problems of Sin and free-will.

On the subject of Original Sin the views of Anselm are hardly to be distinguished from those of Augustine. He has, however, some features peculiar to himself. He points out, for example, that the sins of other ancestors than Adam are not imputed to posterity because they are not committed by one representing or containing in himself the whole of Human Nature. Moreover, Adam's own subsequent sins do not involve us in further guilt, nor do they affect posterity otherwise than as being further instances of the generic sin which had been committed by him while still the representative of entire humanity. That sin only is imputed to all men which all men have committed.

§ 5.

Distinction between the Individual and the Genus as a Theory of Original Sin.

Anselm also endeavours to explain definitely the connexion between the individual and the genus, and to show the importance of this connexion to any discussion of the necessity of sin and assignment of guilt.

Adam sinned not only as an individual but as the pro-

genitor of the whole human race. His posterity existed in him, not as so many distinct persons, but their essence, spiritual and physical, lay seminally in him and their nature was consubstantial with his. Therefore Adam's sin, though an individual transgression, corrupted the whole of Human Nature, which as yet lay in him. Hence the individual by a single act corrupted the genus, because the genus was at the time included in the individual. But in Adam's posterity the reverse process operates. Here the genus corrupts the individual. No individual born into the world can escape the universal depravity, because of the vitiation and apostasy of the nature in which he necessarily partakes, and because of that depravity he cannot avoid sinning as an individual. In this way Anselm asserts a necessity of actual sin in the individual, a necessity not imposed upon him by God, but involved in his unavoidable relation to the sinful race of which he is a member. Thus, to sum up, Anselm declares that as in Adam's case the single transgression or actual sin vitiated the nature and became responsible for Original Sin, so, in the case of posterity, the sin of the nature vitiates the individual and is responsible for single transgressions or actual sin. From this it follows that in the case of Adam the guilt of nature, i.e. the guilt of Original Sin, rests upon the guilt of the individual act, but in the case of posterity the guilt of the individual act rests really upon the guilt of nature, or Original Sin. This is nothing less than the statement that the guilt of actual sin is not so heinous as the guilt of Original Sin. By an act of his will Adam vitiated Human Nature and handed on to all his posterity a tendency to sin. The guilt of originating this generic taint obviously rests upon Adam's individual transgression. But the children of Adam are in a different position from their first parent. We are all individual members of a common Human Nature, but none of us represents the whole of Human Nature; none of us includes nature in its entirety in himself. Therefore our individual sins are merely manifestations of the inherited corruption. They are the result of Original Sin, the production of our tainted nature. Therefore

the guilt of *actual sin* can in some measure be removed from the individual and placed upon our common Human Nature. In other words, the origin of actual sin must be sought not in individual life or experience, but in the unity of the race in Adam. The individual is corrupted by the nature which we share with and receive from Adam. Consequently the guilt of the individual, who is under the dire necessity of sinning, rests upon the guilt of nature, but in that, as Anselm has already asserted, the individual fully shares.

It is thus seen that in Anselm's scheme the source of Original Sin is to be found in the original unity of the human race. Sin, considered as an evil principle, originated at the commencement of human history. If the historical existence of Adam and Eve be denied and the doctrine of the Fall (literally interpreted) be rejected, then the whole of Anselm's theory of Original and transmitted Sin falls to the ground. Original Sin, according to him, implies an original agent, and this original agent must have been one man, containing in himself the whole human race unindividualised and the whole of Human Nature undistributed. The change in moral nature occasioned by Adam's apostasy was left behind by him as an inevitable legacy, to be handed down from generation to generation. Thus the individual must have been born in sin, because he is born of Human Nature, and because Original Sin is transmitted from father to son together with all other inalienable characteristics of Human Nature, flowing in an unbroken stream through all men—except in the case of our Lord alone, who by His miraculous and anomalous birth was kept out of the line of ordinary generation.

§ 6.

Anselm's Theory of Free-will.

Anselm's views on this subject are expressed in his treatise *De Libero Arbitrio*,[1] which takes the form of a dialogue between himself and a pupil. He begins

[1] Hasse, *Anselm von Canterbury* ii 364 *seq.*

by discussing the meaning of free-will. The old definition [1] which declares free-will to consist "in the power of sinning and of not sinning" he pronounces altogether unsatisfactory, on the ground that it withholds moral freedom from God and from the angels, who cannot now sin. Power to sin does not constitute freedom: on the contrary, this faculty, if attached to the will, must necessarily lessen its freedom, inasmuch as inability to lose a thing gives greater freedom in the possession of that thing than when there is the possibility of its loss.

But if power to sin be not of the essence of freedom, must not sin be a necessity?—for there can be no middle course between a voluntary act and a compulsory act. No; sin must not be regarded as a necessity; it is merely a possibility. It was a possibility and nothing more with the evil angels, as with Adam. They had the power to lose their holy estate, just as a rich man has the power to give away his riches, but it is not right to suppose that in doing so they lost their freedom altogether. Man has, it is true, become the servant of sin, but he has not lost his voluntary faculty. His will is still there, and every sin committed remains the voluntary act of the will. But can man be said to be a voluntary agent? Is he not compelled to sin owing to the great power of temptation over the will and owing to the weakening of his will through Original Sin? Not really, for God gave man full power to retain his original state of righteousness if he had wanted to do so and had used that power. The fact that he lost his original righteousness may have in one sense placed man under the guilty necessity of sinning, but that is a different thing from saying that he is not a voluntary agent. To explain this Anselm distinguishes between the *faculty* of will and the *act* of will. The former is the instrument, the latter is merely the use of the instrument. As a faculty the will is unconquerable. It cannot be made to sin against its choice. In the use of it, on the other hand, we often find that the will is powerless owing to the misuse of the original faculty.

Thus the will can be both enslaved and free at the

[1] Potestas peccandi et non peccandi: or Possibilitas utriusque partis.

same time. Its enslavement arises not from creation, but solely from the fact that it has dispossessed itself of its original dowry of righteousness. The fact that now it cannot help sinning does not alter the fact that there was no necessity for it to lose its first holiness, and if it had not done so it could easily have continued in the right course. Its freedom consists in the fact that its sin is the result of self-decision and was in no way forced upon it. It is still in a sense voluntary, because a man cannot sin if the act be done against his will. Temptation is no more compulsory than is the action of the Holy Spirit within us.

Here Anselm points out that the true end and destination of the will is not to choose indifferently either good or evil, but to choose good alone. God intended man to will to do right and nothing else. That is why the Creator endowed man with original righteousness instead of giving him merely a neutral or colourless character. Man was not expected to originate righteousness: he merely had to accept it and to retain it. But as he was created holy, there was thus far no merit in his goodness. This could only be acquired by something of which he himself was the author. Therefore the possibility of losing that state of righteousness was placed within his power, so that by its retention by means of a voluntary act he might win the praise which could only follow an act of self-determination. It is not, therefore, true to say that the Creator's intention with regard to man was that he should have the option of good and evil and that in that option his freedom of will consisted. *Caprice is not freedom.* God intended man to will to choose the right, or rather to retain that holy state in which he was created, that is, that he should possess a self-determination to righteousness. But if the self-determination is to lie entirely with man and not to be forced upon him, there must be the possibility of the alternative course, namely, a self-determination to sin. But that this course was only a possibility and nothing more is proved at once by the fact that in choosing this alternative man had to originate sin. Sin was not the continuance but the inauguration

of a state. Man had to become the author of sin. The fact that he did so shows that the choice of sin was a self-activity. It was absolutely unforced. Nay more, it was a voluntary desertion of the course and destiny which God had intended for mankind. Hence Anselm even attempts to draw a distinction between voluntariness and freedom. Real freedom, he says, is the choice of good and not evil. A man may choose to do wrong voluntarily, but if he does so he ceases to be truly free. If he continues in righteousness, he is both voluntary and free. When he abandons the right path, he is voluntary but no longer free.

The connexion of God with sin is, in Anselm's scheme, merely one of permission. The only Divine causality about its origin is the negative fact that God did not prevent it. Prevention on His part would have destroyed free-will in man and made him an involuntary agent, a machine acting always in one way because it cannot help it. Self-determination would in that case not exist in Human Nature; and the self-determination of man towards right is the one thing above all others that God willed and desired for mankind.

Thus the key-note in Anselm's anthropology is the term 'voluntary'. Original Sin was a *voluntary* departure from original righteousness due to the self-will of Human Nature while yet in Adam and yet not individualised. Actual sin is the *voluntary* repetition of this choice of evil due to the self-will of Human Nature distributed and individualised. The whole process from first to last is *voluntary*.

Having considered the origin of sin, Anselm proceeds to investigate its nature. Here he makes a departure from the views of his predecessors and rejects the view of sin as a negation. Scotus Erigena, like Augustine, had taught that sin is the defect of righteousness. Anselm ascribes to it a positive existence, but defines it in a somewhat novel way. Sin, according to him, consists in doing dishonour to God. There has been much discussion of Anselm's introduction into theology of the honour of God. What does he mean when he says that the man who sins

robs God of His honour (Deum exhonorat)? He means that when we sin we are doing more than merely violating a law or a principle: we are injuring a person; we are wronging God. He who does not render to God the debt of a holy life, which is the honour that is His due, is taking away from God something that is His. Such a one may be said to be actually wronging God.

But Anselm goes further. Sin regarded in this light is something for which God requires satisfaction. His honour has been violated. An offence against Him has been committed. Justice demands, Divine interest demands, that reparation be made. Hence Anselm's view of the vicarious nature of the Atonement. As sin must be punished, Christ suffered instead of the sinner. His sacrifice was offered as a means of placating God, who has been grievously wronged. The death of Christ is substituted for man's punishment as the full satisfaction for sin.

§ 7.

Criticism of Anselm's Theory.

Anselm is so important a figure in the history of Christian thought that it is worth while to state what seem to be the merits and the demerits of his theory.

Its chief merit is that it has a profound sense of the seriousness of sin. Anselm never tires of insisting on its gravity. In his time men thought that all was well if satisfaction for sin was made. They thought that this could be done by them without very much trouble. They even thought that in some cases they could pay others to make satisfaction for them. In our day the tendency is to think satisfaction unnecessary. An age brought up on natural science is inclined to minimise the gravity of sin—to put it down to heredity, to surroundings, to natural impulses which will in due course be outgrown, and which, in any case, do not matter very much. To Anselm belongs the credit of recognising that sin creates an infinite liability which has to be dealt with by an infinite satisfaction, and it is not very bold to say that no conception of sin which underrates its seriousness and minimises the desperate

nature of the condition it produces is adequate to the truth about sin as it stands revealed in the Christian conscience. As against all such imperfect views, the New Testament and the conviction of every thinking man support Anselm when he says: "Nondum considerasti quanti ponderis sit peccatum".

It is a further merit of Anselm that he approaches the vexed question of free-will in such a way as to avoid doing violence either to the holiness of God or to the reality of evil. In other words, he is the first theologian to attempt a solution of the problem of theodicy, even though his solution may not be altogether satisfactory nor cover the whole ground.

His theodicy breaks down in his failure to explain satisfactorily God's permission of evil in the universe and His delegation of the power to make it actual, as also in his highly artificial distinction between what is 'free' and what is 'voluntary'. The utter futility of this hair-splitting shows that the true solution of the problem of evil cannot be found at all along these lines.

A still more serious demerit in Anselm's system is his revival of the old discredited Augustinian theories. If Adam had existed before the Fall in a state of Original Righteousness, his sin is inexplicable. So far is this theory from revealing or accounting for the origin of sin that it merely removes it farther back and makes it harder to discover. The later schoolmen were nearer the truth and approximated more to modern views in describing Adam's first condition as negative or neutral and as being capable of turning in the direction of either good or evil.

Anselm's theory of Original Sin, too, is illogical in the utter disproportion he supposes to exist between Adam's first transgression and the subsequent transgressions of himself and of other men. The experience of life proves that a first offence, however critical it may be, is less heinous than subsequent repetitions. Anselm makes it in Adam's case not only greater, but greater to an infinite degree and absolutely catastrophic in its results.

Then, again, the fallacy of connecting Original Sin with

personal guilt has been discussed in a previous chapter. Any attempt to identify the human race with its head is purely fictitious and must, when tried at the tribunal of sound reason, be found wanting. Guilt is only predicable of a single person's volitional act. Yet Anselm goes so far as to assert not only that Original Sin involves every man in individual guilt, but that the guilt thus inherited is greater than that incurred by actual sin.

It is also a demerit of Anselm that he treats the Atonement as depending solely on the death of Christ and as something separate from His life and holy example—a view which cannot be maintained. And in regarding Christ's death as an alternative to and a substitute for the punishment of sin, he is ascribing an arbitrariness to God's dealing with man which is repugnant to our sense of equity.

One other criticism must be passed upon the frequent reference made by Anselm to sin as an offence against the honour of God. It might be this if we could really believe that such a thought could ever enter the heart of the Father in heaven, and no other deity is made known to us in Christ. Anselm, quite according to the mind of his time, magnifies the transcendence of God, if indeed it be really magnifying it to regard it as standing in need of vindication. Christ taught the Divine immanence, or in other words, the Divine love. Sin is that which grieves, not that which aggrieves God.

When Anselm places the origin of sin entirely with man, he seems to forget that every individual man starts, not merely with a choice to make, but in such circumstances, both external and internal, as must make that choice terribly difficult. Why does God place men in so hazardous a position? For the same reason that a loving parent sends the child to school, where there is an ever present risk that it may learn evil rather than good. God does it—the parent does it—because there is no other way in which it is possible for the child to choose good rather than evil except by standing where it is possible to choose evil rather than good.

§ 8.

Thomas Aquinas (A.D. 1227–74).

The next theologian to make any real progress towards an understanding of the Doctrine of Sin was Thomas Aquinas, who, being a deep student of philosophy, applied the teaching of Aristotle to Christianity and constructed a theory of Human Nature based on the system of the great Greek ethical philosopher. His contribution to theology was a distinct advance on anything that had been achieved before. Unfortunately, however, Aquinas was unable to shake himself free from the shackles of Augustinianism, and he hampered his investigation at the very outset by founding his new system upon the doctrine of the great African Father in all its uncompromising severity. He failed because he essayed the impossible. He failed because he endeavoured to reconcile two views of Human Nature which were essentially irreconcilable.

But the work of Aquinas has the merit of originality, and because of that merit his *Summa* became the handbook of many mediaeval theologians, and may be said to reflect the theological thought of the Middle Ages. First, then, his views on the subject of sin demand examination.

Thomas Aquinas on Original Sin.

The great difficulty that every system of anthropology has to face at the outset is the origin of evil.

Three possible explanations are given by Aquinas. The first is that evil is permitted by way of contrast, to show up good to greater advantage and to make it appreciated as it ought to be.[1] If it be true that good gains in value owing to the presence of evil in the world, then it must be allowed that evil is a necessary part of the ordered universe and could scarcely be dispensed with.

This is a very remarkable anticipation of the evolutionary view of evil, but a discussion of this must be deferred until the next chapter.

[1] *Summa Theol.* 1ma Q. 22 Art. 2. Si enim omnia mala impedirentur, multa bona deessent universo.

The second explanation is based on the necessity of variety. It is essential that there should be different natures in the world. The law of variety seen throughout the visible universe requires this. The differentiation of natures renders it necessary that some should be nobler than others, that some should possess a finer and stronger will than others, that some, in short, should be strong enough to do right in spite of all temptation to do otherwise.

This view is a corollary of the previous view. It is clearer if expressed in terms of evolution. Evolution demands imperfection in its earlier stages, an imperfection of which, as Bishop Butler argues,[1] the justification can only appear when the scheme has reached its consummation. Evolution also conduces to variety—it is the very law of variety which Aquinas had discerned to be present in the universe, though unaware, of course, of the scientific cause of this variety.

The third explanation given by Aquinas is based upon Augustine's theory that evil is negative. In this respect both are following a Greek philosophy that first entered Western theology through Alexandrine Neoplatonism. God is the source of all existence. Evil is a defect: a departure from real existence. Evil, therefore, so far from having its origin in God, is a departure from God and a desertion of His will and His purpose. Evil, therefore, is outside the category of substance and is no-being, or in a word, nothing.

Aquinas also goes on to show that there are two respects in which evil is to be regarded as nothing. It is first of all nothing in the sense of pure negation, and it is in the second place nothing in the sense of privation. Evil is a privation of form. It is a defect of action. It is failure to do that which man was intended to do. It is failure to attain that end for which the moral creature was designed. As evil in the case of salt, for example, is lack of saltness, so evil in the case of the will is a defect of the natural and proper action of the will. This argument as applied to the origin of evil seemed to Aquinas to

[1] See his *Sermons on Human Nature.*

be a satisfactory solution of the problem. That which has no existence has no cause, and that which has no cause it is impossible to ascribe to a Universal Cause. Hence evil is not to be referred to the causal will of God.

This argument was clearly derived from earlier writers, but the approval bestowed upon it by Aquinas is explained by his anticipation of the answer to be supplied in after-times by the philosophy of evolution. Evil is negative in the sense that it is the failure on the part of man to consent to be evolved. It is not an entity; it is a privation.

§ 9.

Thomas Aquinas on Free-will.

Aquinas maintained that God was the prime cause of the will [1] and that it was derived from Him as the great Universal Cause which set all things in motion and gave all things their characteristic nature. But while God moves inanimate things by *necessary* causes, i.e. by causes that are external and unalterable, He moves other things by contingent causes, i e. causes not fixed by God but dependent on some intermediate agent. Thus the will is moved by the voluntary motion of its possessor. Man is master of his will and moves it to action or refrains from moving it to action at his pleasure.

It appears from this paragraph that Aquinas is in process of emancipation from the doctrine of necessity. He acknowledges that man is in a different category from nature and that his will tends towards freedom. Aquinas is not to be blamed because he did not pursue the subject farther—the wonder is rather that he advanced as far as he did, and that he cut himself adrift in so many respects from Augustinianism, which must have possessed an influence on the minds of mediaeval scholars of which it is now hardly possible to frame an adequate conception. All praise then to Aquinas for his bold assertion of human freedom, in spite of the risk of being accused of Pelagian tendencies.

[1] *Summa Theol.* 1ma 2dae Q. 10 Art. 6. Voluntatis causa nihil aliud esse potest quam Deus.

Aquinas next applies himself to the question why some men are endowed with Grace to aid the will while others are not. Here Aquinas falls back upon the old position of Augustine, that weakness of will is not the fault of the individual but the fault of the whole race. Aquinas does not mean by this that man is free from blame. Responsibility rests on man, inasmuch as after all he is a voluntary agent and is possessed of will, though it be but a weak will. He is therefore capable of praise or blame. But the real reason why Grace is withheld, where it is withheld, is the want of desire for Grace in the individual due to the corruption of Human Nature through the sin of Adam.

Holding the literal interpretation of the Genesis record, it is hard to see that Aquinas could have gone further than he did. He safeguarded individual responsibility as much as he dared.

§ 10.

Thomas Aquinas on Grace.

It is in his doctrine of Grace that the philosophical leaning of Aquinas is most clearly seen. Beginning with the Augustinian doctrine of irresistible Grace, which neither in its first bestowal nor in its continuance depends upon any act of man's will, he incorporated with this the Aristotelian doctrine of 'habits', maintaining that God imparted goodness in the form of habit, and thus drawing a distinction between *habitual* and *actual* Grace.[1] By 'habit' is meant a certain bias or tendency to act in a certain way.

Dealing with the subject of 'infused habits', Aquinas divides them under two categories: (1) those bestowed by nature at birth, and (2) those bestowed after birth by God. The first class, consisting of natural habits,[2] he confines chiefly to those connected with the body, such as Chastity, Temperance and so forth, which some possess by nature in a marked degree and others seem totally

[1] *Summa Theol.* 1ma 2dae Q. 110 Art. 9. Donum habitualis gratiae non ad hoc datur nobis ut per ipsum non indigeamus ulterius divino auxilio.

[2] Ib. 1ma 2dae Q. 51 Art. 1. Sunt in hominibus aliqui habitus naturales.

to lack. Aquinas admits, however, a natural moral virtue in a limited way (called by Aristotle φυσικὴ ἀρετή), and says that principles of Honesty, Justice and Uprightness may be, and sometimes are, inherent even in a pagan, though in their truest form they can only be found side by side with Christian faith.

Under the heading of the second class, or habits infused by God, Aquinas places the theological virtues—Faith, Hope and Charity. But these virtues, even when bestowed, cannot be put into action without another spiritual force. Consequently, Aquinas added to the imparted habits the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost—Wisdom, Understanding, Knowledge, Counsel, Piety, Fortitude and Fear. This second class of infused habits differed, according to Aquinas, from the first class in this, that they were intended for the spiritual benefit of man, while the former were designed for his worldly good. But the two together constitute what he termed 'habitual' Grace, or the Grace of imparted habits.

Habitual Grace, however, by itself is inadequate, because it cannot put itself into motion. A disposition to do a thing does not necessarily mean the performance of the action, nor does the possession of a habit imply also the exercise of that habit. One theory was that the power which sets these habits in motion is free-will, but Aquinas and the schoolmen repudiated this as implying that free-will had an originating and causative function assigned to it, which they denied. They fell back, therefore, on another explanation and assumed an external power, namely, a further and different kind of Grace, which they called 'actual Grace' (gratia actualis). This, according to Aquinas, is the real motive power which acts on habitual Grace, giving effect to it and making it bear fruit. 'Actual' Grace, in fact, is only an extension of the Augustinian theory of Grace, but it was made much of and insisted on with great emphasis by the Thomists and by their successors, the Jansenists, as the only doctrine which precluded the boast of merit on man's part, for if he was moved by his own choice to make use of habitual Grace, then he might claim credit for his action, which was absolutely opposed

to the doctrine of Predestination. 'Actual' Grace, therefore, was the special discovery of Aquinas, and this doctrine was vigorously defended by him as being one of the most important and impregnable positions of Christian truth.

It is thus seen that, while supporting the main principles of Augustinianism, Aquinas introduces important modifications, which mark a more liberal attitude. Especially remarkable is his admission of natural virtues even in the heathen. This liberality was forced upon him by his dependence upon Aristotle, for whom he had, as in private duty bound, to find a niche in the temple of God.

Such is a brief account of the system of Aquinas, based, as has been shown, on the anthropology of Augustine, but tending to a more liberal outlook on Human Nature generally, owing to the influence of Greek philosophic speculation.

There was throughout the Middle Ages a general restlessness and dissatisfaction with the uncompromising severity of Augustine's views, even among those who ranked themselves amongst his followers, and side by side with a willingness to accept in the main his theory of sin there flowed a strong current of opinion inclining to the less rigorous modes of thought represented by the Semipelagian school. These two opposite tendencies had to be reckoned with when the Council of Trent met, A.D. 1546. In attempting to reconcile them, therefore, the Tridentine reformers were compelled to resort to a somewhat ambiguous method of phraseology, but it will be seen on examination that they themselves favoured on the whole the Semipelagian and not the Augustinian anthropology. The language of their decrees, it is true, seems to support the Augustinian doctrine, but they were composed with such ingenuity that Augustine's real views on the subject of Original Sin were in reality left free to be received or rejected at will, while in the explanation of the Canons in the anathematising clauses they actually took up a Semipelagian position.

§ 11.

COUNCIL OF TRENT (A.D. 1546). SEMIPELAGIAN TENDENCY OF THE TRIDENTINE DECREES.

The statement of the Council respecting the doctrine of Original Sin is expressed in the three following Canons, which are certainly capable of an Augustinian interpretation:

"If anyone shall not confess that the first man Adam, when he had transgressed the command of God in Paradise, lost immediately the holiness and righteousness in which he had been created, and incurred through the offence of this transgression the wrath and indignation of God, and thus the death which God had previously threatened, and with death captivity to the power of him who had the kingdom of death, that is, the devil, and that the entire Adam, both body and soul, was through this transgression changed for the worse: let him be accursed." [1]

"If anyone assert that the transgression of Adam injured himself alone, and not his posterity, and that in losing the holiness and righteousness which he had received from God, he lost it for himself alone and not for us, or, that having been polluted by the sin of disobedience he transmitted only death and the punishment of the body to the whole human race, but not sin itself, which is the death of the soul: let him be accursed, since he contradicts the Apostle who says: 'By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, seeing that in him all sinned.'" [2]

"If anyone assert that this sin of Adam, which is one in origin, and, being transmitted by propagation and not by imitation, is inherent in all and belongs to each, is removable by the power of man's nature, or by any other remedy than the merits of the only Mediator our Lord Jesus Christ . . . let him be accursed." [3]

The language of these Canons on the difficult problem of Original Sin is intentionally vague, and might even have been accepted by Augustine himself without suspicion, but when we turn to the *Roman Catechism*,[4] which

[1] Canones Concilii Tridentini, Sessio V § 1. [2] Ib. Sessio V § 2.
[3] Ib. Sessio V § 3. [4] *Catechismus Romanus* P. 1 Cap. ii Q. 18.

followed the Canons and had the same authority, we find the statement that *original righteousness is not a natural but a supernatural endowment*, i.e. that it was added to man by God after his creation and did not form an original part of his constitution. This, though not contrary to the Canons, is directly in conflict with the Augustinian theory. It implies that man was created imperfect. He is not, to commence with, sinful, but neither is he holy. The addition of the gift of original righteousness, added after creation, or at least independently of the creative act, is necessary in order that the soul, which, as being rational and immortal, tends upwards, may obtain the victory over the body, which, as being full of carnal propensities, tends downwards,[1] and that thus the natural antagonism between body and soul may cease and the creature become perfect. Augustine's theory, on the other hand, regarded man as being created perfect. Original righteousness entered into his very composition as coming from the Creator, and was not a thing which had to be superadded afterwards. Thus the Tridentine theologians may be said to be on Semipelagian lines in modifying the Augustine doctrine of Original Sin. They did not admit the total corruption of man by the Fall. They merely said that he was changed for the worse (in deterius), and in asserting or implying that man was created imperfect they take the prime cause of Original Sin farther back than the Fall and place its origin in the natural tendency of the body as opposed to the soul, that is, in the lower part of created Human Nature as opposed to its higher—in the natural part as opposed to the spiritual—in the earthly part as opposed to the Divine.

But it is in the logical conclusion of this theory that its Semipelagian tendency is most clearly seen. The above doctrine that original righteousness was a supernatural gift resulted in the tenet that the Fall brought about the loss of a supernatural and not of a natural gift. As a result of Adam's sin the spiritual part of man lost its ascendancy over his body, and the two natures, the

[1] See Bellarmin, *Gratia Primi Hominis*, and his explanation of the official theory of original righteousness.

higher and the lower, with which he was created, fell back into their primitive antagonism. Original Sin in this scheme means nothing more than the loss of original righteousness. Man was not thereby totally depraved, but "changed for the worse," that is, he was turned back into the negative condition in which he was created. Augustine regarded the conflict between the flesh and the spirit as the result and the proof of the Fall, and would condemn as Gnostic the idea that by creation and the nature of things there must be opposition between the two. The Tridentine theologians, on the other hand, following the Semipelagian opinion, held this conflict to be the primitive and natural condition of created man, in which the spiritual side needed to be aided by the addition of a supernatural gift.

The logical result of this view was the denial of the doctrine of irresistible Grace and of the passivity of man n the work of regeneration, a doctrine which was condemned by Roman Catholic theologians as sheer fatalism, and the definite adoption of the Semipelagian theory of co-operation, which they defended with great vehemence, as the following quotations show:

"If anyone shall affirm that the free-will of man was lost and became extinct after the sin of Adam . . . let him be accursed."[1]

"If anyone shall affirm that the free-will of man, moved and roused by God, co-operates not at all by assenting to God thus rousing and calling, in such a way as to dispose and prepare itself for obtaining the Grace of justification, but that, like some inanimate object, it does nothing at all, but is merely passive: let him be accursed."[2]

"If anyone shall affirm that the sinner is justified by faith alone, in the sense that nothing else is requisite which may co-operate towards the attainment of the Grace of justification, and that the sinner does not need to be prepared and disposed by the motion of his own will: let him be accursed."[3]

This attitude towards Original Sin could only result

[1] Canones Concilii Tridentini, Sessio VI § 4.
[2] Ib. Sessio VI § 5. [3] Ib. Sessio VI § 9.

in the denial that it is really to be regarded as sin—a view which was first propounded by the Semipelagians, who looked upon Original Sin as a malady rather than as being truly and properly sin. From them the idea spread widely, and continued to be held by theologians of all shades of opinion, from Duns Scotus to Zwingli and the Arminians. This view the Tridentine reformers did not hesitate to adopt. Since the condition of man after the Fall is the same as when he was first created, before the bestowal of original righteousness, the assertion that the Fall has left man in a sinful state would imply that God created man in a sinful state and would charge Him with the responsibility for human sin. The endowment of the natural man with original righteousness was compared by the Council to the covering of a naked man with clothes. The effect of the Fall was to strip man of his outer covering and leave him in his original condition (in puris naturalibus), neither better nor worse. Hence it was decided at the Council that Original Sin in the regenerate is not properly sin. It is only the fuel of sin (fomes peccati). Thus they changed Augustine's doctrine of Original Sin into a doctrine of Original Evil. Concupiscence, it is true, remains even in the baptised, which is sometimes styled sin, and was so styled by the Apostle,[1] but this was not because it was really and truly sin in itself, but because it came from sin and inclines to sin.[2]

Semipelagian views were thus definitely adopted and stated in an exact form by the Council of Trent, and they held full sway until the Reformation, when the Protestants revived the Augustinian anthropology and reinstated Augustinianism in the Churches of the West.

§ 12.

The Reformers fall back on Augustine's Theory. Luther and Calvin.

Exception may perhaps be taken to the inclusion of these Reformers among the Mediaevalists, on the ground that the Reformation was not so much a mediaeval phenomenon as a breaking away from Mediaevalism, but in

[1] Rom. vi 12, vii 8.

[2] Canones Conc. Trid., Sessio V.

so far as they based their anthropology upon the conclusions reached by Augustine, they went backwards rather than forwards, and they are more fitly included with their predecessors than with their successors.

The leaders of the Protestant Reformation did not attempt a reconstruction of any of the great theological doctrines which had been formulated in the past. The definitions already reached were taken over and embodied in the Reformation Creeds and Confessions; no change was made in them. Most theological conceptions, though not quite all of them,[1] had passed through epoch-making periods when each separate doctrine was discussed, formulated and incorporated in a recognised definition. These definitions the Reformers accepted, not blindly indeed, but because they thought they found support for them in Scripture, and because they needed them as the basis of their evangelical faith.

Particularly did their doctrine of Justification require as serious a view of sin as possible. Consequently Luther, seizing upon the Pauline proposition that whatsoever is not of faith is sin, declared the state of the natural man to be one of guilt, and reaffirmed the old Augustinian doctrine that Original Sin is truly and really sin, that owing to Adam's Fall mankind is completely and utterly depraved and corrupt, and that this corruption involves all the descendants of Adam in personal guilt, for which the punishment is eternal death unless they are regenerated by the Grace of God. Luther's theology is summed up in the *Augsburg Confession*, which is very clear and definite in its assertion of the guilt of Original Sin. Melanchthon's *Apology*, which is an explanatory defence of the *Augsburg Confession*, denies that Original Sin is merely a condition of servitude, and states emphatically that the nature of man is at birth corrupt and vitiated, and that Original Sin of itself entails the penalty of eternal death. The *Formula of Concord*, a summary of High Lutheranism, affirms not only that actual faults and transgressions of God's commandments are sins, but that the hereditary disease by which the whole nature of man is corrupted

[1] E.g. Eschatology.

is a specially awful sin, and is itself an offence whereby all men are rendered odious in the sight of God.

Calvin adopts a similar view, though he arrives at it in a rather different way. He begins with the premise, which he regards as a self-obvious fact, that all men are justly condemned in the sight of God and are liable to punishment. Working back from this theory, he infers that Original Sin cannot be a mere individual sin, but must be common or generic. Otherwise the individual, being innocent, would be undeservedly loaded with the guilt of a sin not his own. This view is brought out still more clearly in the *Formula Consensus Helvetici*, a symbol which may be regarded as the fullest expression of scientific Calvinism on the subject of Original Sin and Grace. In opposition to the theory of mediate imputation[1] put forth by one Placaeus in 1640, this formula maintained that hereditary corruption could not fall upon the entire race unless some fault of this same race had preceded, since God punishes none but the guilty. Adam's sin, therefore, must be immediately and justly imputed to his descendants, as well as the consequences of that sin, and this can only be due to the fact that his descendants were in the person of the progenitor at the moment when he sinned, and shared in committing the transgression, being at that time in the loins of Adam.

Thus both Lutherans and Calvinists maintained a depravation of Human Nature so complete and entire that man is only inclined to evil, and they used language on this subject so strong and exaggerated as to suggest that since the Fall the image of God is wholly obliterated in mankind.[2]

§ 13.

The Views of Luther and Calvin on Free-will and Grace push Augustinianism to its Logical and Fatal Conclusion.

These two Protestant Reformers are no less definite in their affirmation of the impotence of the will of man

[1] I.e. that God imputes to Adam's posterity not his sin but the consequences of his sin.

[2] The *Formula of Concord* says that Original Sin is so deep a corruption of Human Nature that nothing healthy or uncorrupt is left in a man's soul or body, either in inner or outward powers. See also *Confessio Helvetica II* c. 8 and the *Westminster Confession* c. vi.

to do any good thing and of his total inability to attain holiness. Luther's expressions, indeed, regarding the impotence of the sinful will are so extreme as practically to amount to a denial of free-will and of human responsibility.[1] This, of course, goes far beyond anything that Augustine ever taught. Calvin, on the other hand, though he declares that man in his state of sin has lost his spiritual freedom and the power of doing anything truly good, is more strictly Augustinian. He acknowledges the presence of a will in man, but this admission is purely theoretical, since all virtue is ascribed to irresistible Grace. Man's accountability must be secured by the admission of so much will as would make him capable of sin—he must have will enough to be damned, but not will enough to be saved. The Augustinian belief in free-will was based on the argument that man has power to resist Grace. Calvin, too, admitted that man had the power to resist Grace *if he willed*, but asserted that he could not will to resist *effective* Grace, since this Grace determined his will and his inclination. In effect, therefore, Calvin denied the existence of free-will[2] in man, though not so emphatically and boldly as Luther.

The leading Protestant symbols use language in exact agreement with these views. The *Formula of Concord*, expressing the Lutheran view, declares that "before man is illumined, converted, regenerated and drawn by the Holy Spirit, he can no more operate, co-operate, or even make a beginning towards his conversion or regeneration with his own natural powers than can a stone, a tree or a piece of clay." The *Second Helvetic Confession*, representing the Calvinistic view, teaches that activity on the part of man can only result from the operation of Grace: "Regenerati in boni electione et operatione non tantum

[1] Cf. the language from his treatise *De Servo Arbitrio*, quoted in Browne *On the Articles* p. 259: "In his actings towards God, in things pertaining to salvation or damnation, man has no free-will, but is the captive, the subject and the servant either of the will of God or of Satan." "If we believe that God foreknows and predestinates everything . . . then it follows that there can be no such thing as free-will in man or angel or any other creature."

[2] Voluntas, quia inseparabilis est ab hominis natura non periit; sed pravis cupiditatibus devincta fuit, ut nihil rectum appetere queat (*Instit.* I, ii).

agunt passive sed active: aguntur enim a Deo ut agant ipsi quod agant." By this the framers of the symbol appear to mean that the sinful will is inert and lifeless until it is passively acted upon by the influence of the Holy Spirit, but when it has been so acted upon it is spiritually quickened and becomes actively energetic in the pursuit of holiness.

Perhaps a few words should be said here respecting the Calvinistic theory of Predestination. Mozley says that he sees no substantial difference between the Augustinian and the Calvinist doctrine of Predestination, inasmuch as both alike hold an eternal Divine decree which antecedently to all action separates one portion of mankind from another and ordains one to everlasting life and the other to everlasting punishment.[1] It must be admitted that Augustine from time to time used language which practically involved the conclusions which Calvin did not hesitate to draw, but Augustine never definitely formulated the dreadful dogma of reprobation, even though it be admitted to be the logical development of his teaching. Calvin, with remorseless logic, said plainly what Augustine merely hinted at, and there is no doubt that he went beyond Augustinianism in his definite and systematic doctrines of particular redemption and total ruin, as well as in his doctrine of Predestination to destruction.

By particular redemption is meant the doctrine that Christ died not for all men, but only for the elect, i.e. those predestined to life, which is of course directly contrary to Scripture.[2] By total ruin is meant the doctrine that after the Fall man was wholly deprived of original righteousness and became a mass of corruption. In his teaching on reprobation Calvin did not shrink from adopting as an integral part of his system Gottschalk's theory of a Double Predestination, i.e. a Predestination to death as well as a Predestination to life, although that theory had been definitely condemned in the ninth century.

[1] *Predestination* p. 393, Note xxi.

[2] Particular redemption is directly contrary to such passages of Holy Scripture as S. John iii 16–17; 1 Tim. ii 3–6, etc.

Indeed, it was this part of his teaching which stamped Calvinism as a form of fatalism which tended to paralyse effort and reduce man to despair.

It has thus been seen that both the Lutheran and Calvinistic creeds were a reversion from mediaeval Semipelagianism to the Augustinian anthropology in teaching the unity of mankind in Adam, the imputation of the transgression of Adam to all men, the guilt of Original Sin and the inability of man to co-operate in the work of his own salvation. It is not surprising therefore that a reaction to these views soon set in in the direction of the Greek anthropology of the Ancient Church.

§ 14.

The Return to Semipelagianism. Arminianism.

The followers of Calvin gradually broke up into two parties. There were those who adopted the sternest aspect of his system, such as Beza and Gomar, and to these the name 'supralapsarian' has been assigned. Going back to a point prior to creation itself, they regarded creation, the Fall, sin itself, and even redemption, as so many links in the working out of God's original decree predestining some to life and others to wrath. The milder or 'infralapsarian' school began with the Fall and regarded election as interposing to save a portion of the fallen race. This party was very strong in Holland, where opposition to the sterner doctrinal symbols, and especially to the tenet of Predestination, gradually culminated in an open remonstrance. This movement was begun by one James Harmensen, or Arminius as he is usually called, who was a professor of theology at Leyden University. A native of Amsterdam, he was born in 1560 and became a pupil of Beza, but was subsequently led to change his views and declare for the conditionality of Predestination and the universality of Grace. Though he died in 1609 at the early age of forty-nine, the party led by him continued to flourish after his death. Indeed, it was not until 1610 that they adopted a definite and avowed position, when under Episcopius they presented

their famous Remonstrance,[1] setting forth those features of the Calvinistic system which they rejected and giving a clear statement of their own doctrine.

From this statement and from the apology[2] which Episcopius composed later in explanation and defence of it, we gather, in the first place, that the Arminian theologians held Original Sin to be original evil only, which, while it renders all the posterity of Adam unfit for and incapable of attaining eternal life without the Grace and help of God, does not of itself render man blameworthy, for the reason that to be born is an involuntary thing, and therefore to be born with this or that stain, infirmity or injury cannot involve guilt. Consequently, if Original Sin be not sin in the sense of implying guilt, neither can it be sin in the sense of deserving punishment. The Remonstrants therefore denied Original Guilt, and declared that Original Sin can only be called sin by a misuse of the term, and is not sin in the strict sense, being only unavoidable evil. Their objection to the doctrine that Original Sin is guilt is based upon the assumption that the original unity of the human race must not be taken to mean literally that Adam's posterity was actually in him when he sinned, as Augustine and Anselm maintained, but must be taken only in a potential sense, and that Adam's sin was purely individual and was not shared by his descendants.

Secondly, with regard to the doctrine of imputation, the Remonstrants admitted that the sin of Adam may be said to be imputed to his descendants in the sense that the evil to which Adam subjected himself by his sin, whether this evil be regarded as a taint or as a punishment, affects his posterity, with the clear understanding that in the case of his posterity it is not punishment but simply propagated evil, but they deny that the sin of Adam is imputed to his descendants in the sense that God actually judges the posterity of Adam to be guilty of and chargeable with the same sin and crime which Adam committed. The contrary assertion, they say, is at once

[1] *Confessio sive Declaratio Remonstrantium*, Episcopius, Op. II, Roterdami 1665.

[2] *Apologia pro Confessione.*

opposed to Scripture, truth, wisdom, the nature of sin and the idea of justice and equity.[1]

Thirdly, the Remonstrants declared that Predestination only implied a conditional election, or an election upon the ground of foreseen faith, and they repudiated the doctrine of absolute reprobation as a gross error. Inasmuch, they say, as the evil which has come upon the posterity of Adam is of the nature of a misfortune rather than a fault, justice demands that a remedy should be provided for the innocent victims of this unavoidable infirmity. Such a remedy, we find, has been provided, and it is open to all men without exception. God has given in His Son Jesus Christ a free and gratuitous antidote for the universal evil derived from Adam. The doctrine of Redemption by Jesus Christ, who died for all, is in itself a sufficient and complete refutation of the "hurtful error of those who are accustomed to found upon Original Sin the decree of absolute reprobation—a doctrine invented by themselves."[2]

Lastly, the Remonstrants showed plainly that they held a synergistic view of Grace. According to the Augustinian theory, no man receives a Grace sufficient for regeneration without receiving at the same time such a degree of Divine compulsion as overcomes the hostility of his will and effects his regeneration by an irresistible energy. The dependence upon Grace in the Augustinian anthropology is total. The Arminian anthropology admits that the will must first be excited by prevenient Grace, but urges that this is merely a matter of arousing it, not of renewing it. The faculty is merely inert and sluggish, not dead nor yet actively hostile. After the will has been aroused by the action of Grace, then it can and must co-operate in its own regeneration. Hence the Remonstrants asserted that every hearer of the word receives a degree of Grace sufficient to effect his regeneration. If, therefore, a man is not regenerated, the fault must lie with himself, and must be due to his failure to co-operate with the Divine power. Grace can only be rendered

[1] *Apologia pro Confessione Remonstrantium* cap. vii.
[2] *Confessio Remonstrantium* cap. vii.

effective by the working of man's own will.[1] Therefore, in the opinion of the Arminians, the elect differ from the non-elect not in the degree of Grace received from God, for even unbelievers receive sufficient Grace to effect conversion and salvation, but in the use they make of their own energy and in the co-operation of their own will and effort with the Divine influence acting upon them from above.

§ 15.

Two Currents of Opinion running parallel through the Middle Ages. Augustinianism not the 'Vox Ecclesiae.'

It is thus seen that throughout the Middle Ages there were two opposing currents of opinion with regard to the doctrine of Human Nature, one tending to the Augustinian or Latin view of inherited guilt and monergistic regeneration, with all its logical conclusions, and the other tending to the Semipelagian or Eastern view of inherited evil (but not inherited guilt) and synergistic regeneration.

The Augustinian anthropology, though triumphant at first in the West, was gradually superseded by the Semipelagian anthropology, which may be said to have had full sway in the Mediaeval Church, with the exception of the few theologians who still adhered to the main teaching of Augustine. At the Reformation the Protestants, partly to widen the breach with Rome and partly to support their special doctrine of Justification by faith, leaned towards Augustinianism, while the Roman Church, under Jesuit influence, refused to abandon the Semipelagian position. When, however, the Reformation was once established, the old antagonism broke out afresh amongst the Protestants themselves, the Calvinists holding to extreme Augustinianism and the Arminians receding to the Semipelagian view, thus perpetuating the controversy, which has continued with undying vigour down to the present time, so that it may safely be said that the whole of modern Christendom is ranged either on the one side or on the other.

But it is highly essential for the student to see where

[1] *Confessio Remonstrantium* cap. xvii.

the deviation from primitive simplicity began. It began with Augustine himself, with his false and Manichaean views of Human Nature, which threw all subsequent inquiry as to the Doctrine of Sin into utter confusion and into an arid wilderness of tangled speculation.

The supposition, so frequently implied, that the doctrine of the Church *is* Augustinianism rests upon ignorance of two great facts: (1) that there was no Augustinianism before Augustine, and that his views are no part of primitive Christianity, and (2) that the individual speculations of Augustine were profoundly modified by Semi-pelagian tendencies, which from their wide acceptance have a far greater right to be regarded as *vox Ecclesiae.*

CHAPTER VII

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CHAPTER VII

MODERN VIEWS OF SIN

§ 1.

Influence of Evolution on the Doctrine of Sin.

It has been shown in the preceding chapter that the Protestant Churches have generally been Augustinian in their tendencies; while the Church of Rome, though professedly Augustinian both in the earlier and the later stages of its history, has in point of fact become Semipelagian in its sympathies. Indeed, throughout the whole course of the controversy there has continuously been a strong undercurrent of Semipelagian feeling, even when Augustinianism has held most sway. But in spite of strong Semipelagian leanings everywhere and constant Semipelagian reactions, Augustinianism played a great part in moulding the views of the Church on the subject of Sin. During the last century, however, liberty of thought has led students to express their opinions more boldly, even at the risk of conflicting with the accepted doctrine of the Church. The fear of being branded with the stigma of heresy has ceased to seal men's lips, and thinkers have gradually found courage to formulate new theories openly, even when they have felt that their theories opposed beliefs which have long been regarded as sound and orthodox. Scientific discovery and growth in knowledge demand a readjustment of ideas with regard to much that has long passed as true. Many traditional views must be restated in terms of modern thought, and some may even have to be discarded altogether. On the subject of Sin it was scarcely possible for Augustine to arrive at the truth by mere logic. He had not the facts of science before him.

Evolutionary science has altered all preconceived ideas on the subject of the Fall of Adam and the resulting legacy

of a fatal heritage of Sin, which is the essential doctrine and the foundation of the elaborate system constructed by him. The evolutionist sees in the story of the Fall merely a symbolical description of the gradual passing of primitive mankind from an original state of ignorance to the attainment of moral consciousness.

The present chapter will be devoted to a brief consideration of some of the more important theories which have been propounded in recent times regarding the nature of Sin and the condition of mankind in relation to Sin—theories which owe their conception to advance in knowledge of anthropology, evolution and kindred subjects.

Modern speculation on this subject may be roughly divided into five classes :[1]

I. Theories which resolve Sin into mere illusion and unreality.
II. Theories which trace Sin to the will of man.
III. Theories which regard Sin as a necessity.
IV. Theories which confine Sin within the bounds of religion.
V. Theories which seek to explain Sin from empirical observation.

I

Theories which resolve Sin into mere Illusion and Unreality.

It will suffice to turn to Spinoza as the chief modern representative of the negative view of evil, and to inquire how far his speculations contain anything which can be said to contribute towards a solution of the problem of Sin.

§ 2.

Spinoza.

Attacking the nature of evil from a purely metaphysical point of view—a point of view independent of all Christian presuppositions, Spinoza[2] reduces Sin to a mere defect of knowledge. "The knowledge of evil", he says, "is an

[1] Orchard, *Modern Theories of Sin*, disregarding the first of these classes, reduces their number to four.
[2] *Ethics* iv and lxiv.

inadequate knowledge. If the human mind possessed only adequate ideas, it would be unable to conceive of evil." That is to say, if we possessed sufficient knowledge and were able to see things, as God does, "sub specie aeternitatis", we should have no conception either of good or of evil. They simply would not exist for us. This treatment of sin as non-existent and as an illusion due solely to the imperfection of our knowledge renders any consideration as to its origin impossible and unnecessary. In this respect Spinoza differs materially from Augustine. Augustine taught that evil is a lack of something which we ought to have—a "privatio boni"; but in his theory the 'privatio', with which moral evil is to be identified, is something more than a mere lack of what is good; it is something deeper than a mere failure to do right. In its essence it is negative; but in its effect it is accompanied by an inborn corruption, a depraved activity of the will. Thus his conception of the twofold nature of sin provided a philosophical foundation for his explanation of its origin. Spinoza, in rejecting that part of Augustine's doctrine which dealt with the innate corruption of the will, however right on other grounds he may be proved to have been in so doing, deprived himself of the only justification he had for retaining the negative portion of Augustine's theory of evil. We may agree that evil in one sense partakes of the nature of a defect, but only when coupled with the admission that it has also positive results. The latter fact we learn from experience: evil has definite and far-reaching effects, both physical and moral, such as no mere negation could produce: its presence makes itself felt and leaves its mark behind it. If evil be an illusion, our whole experience is an illusion, knowledge is an illusion, conscience is an illusion, life is an illusion; but being unable to regard these facts in any other way than as realities, we must admit that sin has a truly positive existence. The reasons for the rejection of the 'negative' or 'privative' theory of evil may be summed up as follows:

The very term 'good' implies the existence of something which is not only 'not good' but positively 'bad.' The only means man has of perceiving and knowing the good

is by contrasting it with something which is its opposite and not merely its negative. Evil must have a real existence and a positive character in order to constitute the antithesis to good.

Choice implies an alternative. There can be no true choice between good and a negation. If good and evil be not two real and positive existences, ethical distinctions vanish and moral character and conduct becomes a meaningless phrase.

But we can go even further than this. The whole evolutionary process gives the lie to the doctrine of the non-reality of evil. The struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest are based on the antagonism between good and evil. If there were no antagonistic forces there could be no struggle, and there would be no survival of the fittest. Life in all its phases and stages of development, whether physical or spiritual, is a life-and-death struggle between the powers of good and evil. Nay more, in each succeeding stage in the great cosmic process the contrast between good and evil becomes deepened and intensified. It is now generally admitted that the existence of progress implies an end, that the very idea of development is teleological. The theologian sees in evolution not only purpose but Divine purpose. That purpose is the final victory of freedom, or in other words, the preparation of the soul of man by a continuous increment of consciousness for union and fellowship with God. The struggle between good and evil is the essential condition of the evolutionary process, and on the issue of the conflict man's spiritual progress depends. Destroy the power of choice and free-will, and man ceases to be a moral agent. Destroy the presence and antagonism of good and evil in his surroundings, and you remove the very condition on which psychical development depends.

The theories, therefore, which tend to the resolution of evil into illusion, and which treat human personality and will as mere appearance to which no reality corresponds, cannot be said to contribute much towards a solution of the problem of sin, inasmuch as they conflict with inner experience and with the facts of evolution.

II

Theories which trace Sin to the Will of Man.

§ 3.

In the next place, those theories must be considered which seek to place the origin of sin in the human will, and thus endeavour to steer clear of the charge of dualism, from which, in spite of all explanations urged in its defence, Augustinianism has never been able to shake itself entirely free, and at the same time to avoid the grave difficulty of attributing evil to God.

All advocates of any such theory, however, find themselves at once in a dilemma from which there seems to be no escape. If the will is free, why does it universally incline to evil? If, on the other hand, it has an innate tendency to evil, whence did it get this tendency? The origin of evil is in that case merely moved farther back and is as inexplicable as ever. Those who maintain that the will is neutral in tendency and free to choose whichever course of action presents itself in the most attractive light must suppose, in order to account for the universality of evil, either that the inducements to sin are stronger than the inducements to goodness, or that the inducements to goodness are inadequately apprehended and that the moral imperatives have insufficient force to persuade the will of their desirability. But the same tendency is found alike in the ignorant and in the instructed, and the saintly is exposed to sinful impulses no less than the sensual.

On the other hand, those who assert that the will is naturally bad are led to an infinite regress in their quest for the origin of sin, and must admit that if the will merely follows its natural bias, no condemnation is possible and the guilt of sin is destroyed.

There is, therefore, considerable doubt whether those philosophers are right who maintain that the human will is the ultimate cause of sin. If it indeed be the 'causa originans' which they postulate, it remains to inquire how they account for the conflict between the will as prompted

to a lower and the will as prompted to a higher end in this struggle between impulse and reason.

The chief representatives of this school of thought are Emmanuel Kant, Julius Müller and S. T. Coleridge.

§ 4.

Kant.

Kant takes his stand on the freedom of the human will, and begins by demonstrating that it is really free, in spite of the fact that it is, to a certain extent, influenced by phenomena about which nothing can be known or said. The reasoning faculty of man he divides into two parts, which, he says, are totally different, nay, are mutually opposed, viz. *pure* reason and *practical* reason. Under the heading of 'pure reason' he places the whole intellectual life, which is only able to grasp phenomena and can give no account at all of the moral life. Pure reason, he maintains, has no point of contact with ethics.

Practical reason, on the other hand, is able to perceive at once a moral law which is generally recognised as 'conscience', and which teaches man not what is right, but that he ought to do right. This consciousness of a moral law and the resulting desire for ethical perfection is itself the proof of our freedom. 'I ought' necessarily implies 'I can.'

But can there be such a thing as freedom? Everything in this world is subject to an inexorable law of cause and effect. Freedom, as applied to the will, apparently contradicts the necessity of nature and violates the universality of causation.

This difficulty Kant endeavours to overcome by pointing out that there is in man a dualism, that he must be regarded from two points of view. He is at once a 'phenomenal' being—that is, he belongs to the world of things seen and felt; and he is also a 'noumenal' being—that is, he has the power of thought and choice. As a 'phenomenon' he is bound by the law of cause and effect; but as an intelligent entity he is himself a spontaneous and free cause, and

by virtue of the latter capacity he is able to step out of the fatally determined series which attaches to all appearance of things. In this way arises the possibility of asserting the existence and reality of freedom. The human will is an originating cause, which, in spite of all external influences, we feel and know to be free. In fact, the knowledge that we are free is another proof of freedom, and it is from this freedom of will that Kant attacks the problem of the nature and origin of evil.

Kant repudiates the idea that evil is to be identified with sense and rejects the view that it has any material or objective reality. It is an *ethical term*, and it is impossible to apply ethical terms to anything except the will. Nothing can possibly be conceived in the world, or even out of it, which can be called good without qualification, except a good will. Conversely, nothing is bad except a bad will. Evil, therefore, resides solely in the will. It consists in adopting 'maxims' of the will which are opposed to law. It is the perversion of the true balance of reason and sense. It is not a natural property of the will, but something that can be attributed or imputed to the will; and this arises when man complies with the impulses of his sense-nature rather than with the dictates of his reason. Such, briefly, seems to be the nature of evil, and from this point of view he proceeds to investigate its origin.

Why, with absolute freedom to obey the moral imperatives, does man live in open and flagrant violation of what is right? How is the universality of sin to be accounted for?

Kant assumes a 'radical badness' in Human Nature. He does not, indeed, accept the Church's doctrine of Original Sin, because that doctrine implies that moral qualities can be transmitted by natural generation. Evil, he teaches, is not to be regarded as a natural characteristic of our species. We, and not our nature, are responsible for its existence, since good and bad, as has been said, can be predicated only of the will. This radical badness, then, in Human Nature is, in Kant's eyes, a propensity or tendency to a determination of the will in the direction of a violation of the moral law, which, though not in itself sin, is yet the source of all sin in man.

On this universal propensity to evil the philosophy of Kant can shed but little light. He cannot see its origin, nor any prospect of deliverance from it. The only thing that can be said about it is that, being evil, and being imputed as sin, it must have been adopted by free-will. The propensity itself is, of course, not an act, but the adoption of it into the will is an act ; and since its origin lies somehow in our freedom and yet seems to be prior to any conscious act, it must be of the nature of a super-sensible or ' timeless ' act. Further than this it is impossible to go, and in the last resort Kant declares that the origin of the ' radical badness ' in Human Nature is quite inscrutable.

Kant is the first philosopher to have perceived clearly the tremendous difficulty of reconciling the fact of an innate bias to sin with the fact that man's conscience charges him with the guilt of it as if it were his own creation. He apprehends the problem, but he offers no solution.

Summed up, Kant's conclusions amount to little more than this, that we are all absolutely free ; that man has universally used his freedom so as to subordinate the moral law to self-love, and has thereby created for himself a propensity to sin, but that the reason for his doing so lies beyond rational discovery.

Though he ignores the fact of moral development and the bearing of evolution on the problem of sin,[1] yet to him we owe a clear statement of the moral law, namely, man's consciousness of a moral imperative and his realisation that he has not obeyed it. For this reason Kant is generally regarded as the bulwark of the orthodox conception of sin and the vindicator of conscience.

The chief weakness of the Kantian position lies in his attempted separation of the moral and the intellectual faculties. The two spheres are closely connected and are not independent of one another. Nor is it easy to see why sin should be confined to non-compliance with the imperatives of the moral law. The intellectual life also has its imperatives, to ignore which must equally be regarded as sin. Moreover,

[1] " Kant was ready to admit the possibility of evolution, but to him it did not seem to affect the absolute claims of moral reason."—Oman, *Faith and Freedom*, p. 188 foll.

Kant leaves out of sight the fact that the imperatives of the moral law are not perceived by all men in the same degree. Children, for example, and adults endowed with limited reasoning capacity cannot be said to have the same freedom of choice or the same perception of the moral imperatives as those whose mental powers are more fully developed. Much more difficult, then, is it to reconcile Kant's concept of freedom with the admitted fact that a man in full possession of his faculties may perceive the moral law without having the power to fulfil it.

Lastly, when Kant speaks of the bias to evil as being a 'timeless act' which is prior to consciousness and yet not referable to a previous existence, he is using a phrase to which it is well-nigh impossible to assign any intelligible meaning. His whole theory conflicts with the evidence of experience, which is directly opposed to the idea that sin arises from the adoption of a universal rule or general maxim, since many evil acts are committed every day without any such deliberate and voluntary acceptance of a disposition to sin, which in his view must precede the determination of the will.

§ 5.

Julius Müller.

The second representative of this school of thought is the philosopher and theologian, Dr. Julius Müller, whose chief aim is to discover a rational ground for the consciousness of guilt which is experienced by every human being, and to reconcile that consciousness of guilt with the fact that there is in the human race an evil taint for which, it being prior to any action on the part of the individual, the reason of man declares that he is not responsible. He dismisses the Augustinian doctrine of Original Sin as valueless to explain the feeling of guilt, for there can be no guilt attaching to such an inheritance. Accepting the doctrine of the Fall of Adam to account for this innate propensity to sin, he endeavours to explain the universal consciousness of responsibility for this sinful tendency in another way. He assigns

to the feeling of guilt for inborn sinfulness an *extra-temporal* origin.[1] He imagines a mode of existence of created personalities before time began, in which transgression first took place, and upon which our life in the sphere of time is dependent. There was no universal extra-temporal Fall: this transgression was the spiritual act of each individual being. The pre-natal sin of man resembles to a limited degree, and may be paralleled by, that of Satan himself. The world may be looked upon in the light of a kind of a penitentiary in which we are afforded our means of redemption, save that we neither have nor can have any memory of this pre-natal Fall. Hence Adam possessed the capacity to be tempted afresh and to sin. This theory of a personal Fall for every man previous to that of the race in Adam would account for the universality of sin, and would provide what is at least an intelligible explanation of the fact that, as soon as moral consciousness awakens, man finds a sinful condition to be already present, and yet is convicted by his conscience with the feeling of responsibility for it as if it were his own fault.

Müller then proceeds to state that, in order to account for guilt, there must be a free falling away in this life. Sin does not originate in our temporal existence, it only steps forth. But as soon as it does step forth, then guilt begins and guilt-sense grows with our moral development. This last is a factor ignored by Kant, but regarded by Müller as containing the key to the whole problem. When did this development begin? Far back in our childhood, when the first sin of our temporal existence was committed. With the first wrong act, the first "stepping forth of sin", the guilt-sense arises and moral development begins. Furthermore, "our developing consciousness of the moral law", he says, "is always in advance of our moral attainment". This statement leads Müller to draw a distinction between law and duty, the former being the perfect moral ideal, the latter being that which is morally required from the individual at any given moment of time; for development implies temporary imperfection in regard to the moral ideal.

Then, again, while Kant makes every sin equally guilty,

[1] *Christian Doctrine of Sin*, Urwick's Trans. ii 400.

and guilty in the highest possible degree, Müller, on the other hand, recognises *degrees of guilt*. The degree of guilt, according to his theory, is determined by the magnitude of the sin and the extent of causation present at the moment. By causation he understands the power of the will and the degree of consciousness that an action is sinful. Hence Müller admits that sin resides largely in the will.

With regard to the will, he holds that freedom is very limited.[1] There never is a moment in moral development when there is perfect equipoise of oppositely determined impulses. The will is influenced chiefly by two factors, conscience and habit. Conscience is an uncertain element, because it is limited by the result of previous development. Habit, on the other hand, is a powerful influence, because the will cannot be excluded from the result of its own past decisions.

To sum up, Müller retains the doctrine of the Fall of the whole human race in Adam in order to account for the inborn propensity to sin; and he even goes so far as to maintain that Adam might have become "the originator of a development liberating the will from its original variance, provided that he had transmitted to his posterity a sensuous nature untainted by sin". He did not do so, however, and therefore subsequent generations inherited from him a corrupted sensuous nature. But to account for the feeling of individual responsibility for the innate "root of evil", Müller supplements the received teaching with the supposition of an individual pre-temporal Fall.

This work of Dr. Müller is still regarded as a standard treatise on the doctrine of sin. Not only is it less open to criticism on philosophic and scientific grounds than the work of Kant, but it more nearly approaches, especially in the matter of moral development, to the most recent theories on the subject. Nor is there any doubt but that, had he lived at the present day instead of seventy years ago, he would have been a ready listener to the arguments against the validity of the Augustinian theory based on Natural Science and the results of the recent critical investigation of the Scriptures.

[1] See Orchard's criticism, *Modern Theories of Sin* p. 51.

One objection to Müller's system has been raised,[1] and may perhaps be mentioned here, viz. that in making a child's first sin responsible for all life's sins, it exaggerates its seriousness and makes it the greatest of all sins, whereas it is really the least both in magnitude and in the realisation of its frightful significance. This can perhaps be met by the reply that the first act of sin in childhood has really little significance in comparison with the first real act of sin, which in Müller's theory was committed in the pre-natal existence. The first sin of childhood is merely the first manifestation of the inborn root of evil, the necessary 'stepping forth' of the sinful taint. Though the guilt-sense which regulates and controls all later actions commences then, guilt itself lies not in that isolated act, but in the *accumulation* of sinful acts as growth proceeds, which accounts for the increase of sin-consciousness with the years.

The most unsatisfactory, or at any rate the least convincing, feature of Müller's theory is his conception of a pre-natal Fall. It was doubtless formulated by him not because of its intrinsic probability, but because it occurred to him as a possible solution of the great antinomy which Kant's work had served to emphasise : the antinomy between the fact of an innate taint of sin and the responsibility felt by the individual for his sinful state.

Its weakness lies partly in the fact that it is unscientific, as being at best a dim conjecture as to the truth of which the experience of our present life yields no indication, and partly in the fact that it increases the difficulty of the origin of sin. To remove the first sin to an extra-temporal sphere affords no explanation of its source. It merely puts it farther back. Either our pre-natal Fall was arbitrary, in which case it is inexplicable and savours of insanity, or it was a diabolical act, like Satan's, and shows us to be evil by nature, which leads to an infinite regress. Moreover, if each being fell independently of others and the pre-temporal state was one in which man was less beset by temptations than he is in this life, the universality of sin becomes more mysterious and more inexplicable than it was before.

[1] Orchard, *Modern Theories of Sin* p. 53.

That Müller realised this defect of his theory is shown by his statement that he was ready to accept any explanation which should view man as existing within the bounds of time and would enable us to understand his guilt, provided that this explanation did not surrender the truths to be explained.[1]

§ 6.

S. T. Coleridge.

The third representative of this school of thought is Samuel Taylor Coleridge, whose "Reflections"[2] on Original Sin were merely a development of the Kantian theory of radical evil. He recognises this infirmity, but he seeks another avenue of escape from the difficulty of accounting for its origin than that suggested by Kant. This he does by supposing not an individual Fall, but a simultaneous and universal apostasy of the whole human race.

First, however, he endeavours to show that the origin of evil is not to be traced to nature nor to a propensity to evil naturally inherent in mankind, as Augustine taught, but solely to the will of man.

All nature, he says, is bound by cause and effect. Nothing in the world happens without reference to something that occurred previously and on which it is dependent until we come to the sphere of personality. There we find the one and only independent energy capable of stepping outside the natural sequence of events, and that is the human will. The will contains in itself the power of opposing nature, of resisting causation and of originating an act or state. Will is an inseparable characteristic of 'personal being', and the essential idea of 'personal being' is the capacity of recognising and acknowledging the moral law. The moral law, once perceived, should of itself suffice to determine the will to a free and voluntary obedience to this law. Whatever tendency there is in the will to resist or oppose this obedience is evil. The will ought to will the good. It

[1] *Christian Doctrine of Sin*, Urwick's Trans. ii 397.
[2] *Aids to Reflection.*

universally inclines in the opposite direction. The reason for this is the corrupt nature of the will. Sin resides in the will; but how the will became corrupt is a mystery. Thus far Coleridge is in substantial agreement with Kant: but now his peculiar theory begins to emerge.

The corruption of the will, he says, must have a common ground, because of its universality; but it is a mistake to suppose that it can be an evil principle inserted or infused into the will by another or be the result of the action of another, as the Augustinian doctrine of the Fall implies. In that case the will would be no will. It would cease to have an existence as an independent and originating force. He therefore absolutely rejected the notion of hereditarily transmitted sin.

Since the corruption of the will is a fact, it must be self-originated; for if it were not self-originated, man would not be responsible for his own corruption. But that he is responsible not only for his actual sin but also for his sinful condition is declared by the universal verdict of the human conscience. Therefore, a cause for the corruption of the will must be sought which will enable it to be attributed not to an individual sinning for the rest, but to the whole race sinning together.

This thought leads Coleridge to a somewhat incomprehensible idea, namely, that Adam represents not an individual but the genus, and that Original Sin is a 'timeless' act of all human wills collectively. Thus, abandoning the individualism of Kant, he predicates sin of the race instead of the individual, and so arrives at his theory of a universal apostasy.

But, like his master, he resorts to another sphere independent of relations of time for this universal act of sin, and so is driven to repeat the Kantian idea of a 'timeless act', which, so far from explaining the origin of sin, is admitted by Coleridge himself to lie "beyond reason" and to disappear in mystery.

Except for the fact that Coleridge recognises the solidarity of the human race—a conception foreign to Kant, who was unable to do justice to the social side of man owing to

the extreme individualism of the age in which he lived—there seems to be no advantage in Coleridge's theory, nor does it appear to make any real advance upon the scheme of Kant.

If it is difficult to attach a meaning to Kant's 'timeless act' as applied to the individual, Coleridge's 'timeless act' of all human will collectively is quite meaningless; for 'human will collectively' can only mean *the sum of human wills*, and how a timeless act of all wills could affect the will of the individual in time it is impossible to understand.

Again, to make Adam mean the human race is the same as to explain the universality of sin by saying that we all share Human Nature. The theory that "every man is the adequate representative of all men" may be true in so far as it emphasises the indissoluble connexion of the individual with the whole human race, but it sheds no light on the problem of the sinfulness of Human Nature nor on the mystery of the origin of evil.

III

Theories which regard Sin as a Necessity.

§7.

The difficulties involved in grounding sin in the will of man gave rise to another school of thought which regarded sin as a necessity, owing to the present condition of things and the nature of this world. Though this school treated the subject from what was apparently a completely new point of view from that taken by their predecessors, they were in reality merely falling back on the Augustinian doctrine of the necessity of sin owing to the loss of free-will.

There are two ways of viewing sin as a necessity, neither of which, however, can escape the charge of minimising—if not of denying altogether—the gravity of sin and of divesting the whole human race of responsibility. Those who endeavour to explain the existence of evil as a necessity

must either deny the omnipotence of God and give evil an origin independently of Him—perhaps even prior to Him—or they must attribute it to God Himself, whether it be regarded as something merely permitted by Him or as His actual creation.

The first view, viz. the denial of Divine Omnipotence, regards necessity as a power to which God no less than man is subject. But what necessity can there be outside of or prior to God? If God is not the beginning of all things, neither can He be the end, and He is certainly not the God our souls crave for. This delimitation of the Absolute by an external power is probably due to an erroneous conception of the Deity based upon the popular view of an anthropomorphic personality, and is now giving place to the conception of God as the Being to whom nothing is external, and who finds expression in the universe and is present in every tiniest atom of the wondrous whole.[1] The idea of a necessity behind God is adopted and developed by Schelling.

The second way of viewing sin as a necessity is a modern development of the theory propounded by the mediaeval scholastics, who held the doctrine of the necessity of evil to be quite consistent with Divine Omnipotence and Divine Goodness. An omnipotent God, they said, can be regarded as permitting evil by way of variety to heighten good and set if off to better advantage. Good could not be known without the foil of evil. This view, modernised and developed so as to accord with the known facts of evolution, is held by those who seek to confine necessity to Human Nature. If Human Nature is to be what God intended it to be, it must in the process of development discover for itself what is good and what is evil, and this it can only do by trial. Such is the view of Hegel, who has in the past exercised considerable influence on the development of theological thought, and it must certainly be admitted that his theory has much in its favour. Against it is danger of sin being regarded as inevitable and excusable.

[1] See Canon J. M. Wilson's article in the *Hibbert Journal*, January 1919.

§ 8.

Schelling.

In his *Philosophical Investigations on the Nature of Human Freedom and Subjects connected therewith*, Schelling contrasts the two principles of personality, viz. 'ego' and 'non-ego', and in the separability of these two principles he finds the possibility of moral evil. Man, he insists, is absolutely free, and this freedom, in so far as it implies power to do evil, must have its origin independently of God. Schelling interpreted Kant's distinction between supersensible and sensible existence as the difference between existence before and after birth. He conceived of the soul as existing before birth as an "original timeless will". In process of development it chooses at the outset, and by choosing "freely causes itself to be somewhat". This beginning of self-dependent existence takes place in eternity, but by choosing such an existence it subjects itself to the exigencies and limitations of temporal life, involving the necessity to sin which is an inseparable feature of development.

The only conception of a Fall in Schelling's system is the change from an absolute to a self-dependent existence. Sin is attributable to the soul's own eternal choice, and, contrary to Kant's doctrine of determinism, Schelling regards sin as self-predetermined, being due to the character of the soul which is brought into the world at birth. The origination of sin, therefore, is not to be sought in a conscious act, but is the creation of the personal will before time, arising from the natural spontaneity of individual beings.

Applying to the existence of God the knowledge of personality gained by experience of human life, Schelling conceives of a twofold element in the Deity—a self-contained principle corresponding with the 'ego' and an independent Basis corresponding with the 'non-ego' or external necessity. His conclusion from this is that God is not absolute. There is some power independent of and prior to Him. This leads him to the theory that evolution, in covering all nature, includes also the Deity—that God

Himself is subject to development, that He Himself is evolved from the Basis of a blind unconscious will-to-be and is still in progress towards an absolute goal. This theory of course deprives God of omnipotence, and by so doing is supposed to explain the existence of evil ; but by making evil an essential moment in the progressive or eternally realised life of God, Schelling actually denies it while endeavouring to explain it.

Two serious objections to Schelling's theory will now be considered. Schelling implies that man is self-made, that his being is his own act, and that he is therefore responsible and guilty for the evil involved in temporal existence. Thus, in his effort to establish man's freedom and to find a place for it in a world governed by necessity, he is driven to an unscientific conception and one contradicted by all experience. Nothing is more certain, as Kant himself maintained, than that man is not self-made—that his existence is not and could not be his own act. Indeed, it is logically impossible to assert that man is in any way responsible either for his own advent into the world or for anything which may have happened to him before the era of consciousness began. In making temporal existence dependent upon this hypothetical act of self-causation, Schelling is really denying freedom while asserting it. Man's whole conscious life, upon his own admission, is ruled by absolute necessity.

The second objection deals with Schelling's conception of God, which, though opposed to prevalent Christian ideas about the Deity, many theologians have attempted to assimilate to Christian doctrine, without, perhaps, a full realisation of the consequences to which it leads. There may possibly be something to be said for the theory, now gaining ground in many quarters, which denies omnipotence to God, but this is a very different matter from denying His infinity and His perfection. Perhaps the error, as has already been suggested, lies in not sufficiently enlarging the idea of personality when applied to the Deity to include the conception of an all-pervading Presence filling, animating and inspiring all things. But to apply the idea of evolution to God is a paradox. If infinity and perfection are not

to be found in Him, where are they to be found? Whence come our conception of and aspiration after perfection? What guarantee is there that a goal will ever be reached or that, when reached, it will be perfect? The conception of a world moving towards a perfect and infinite God, eventually to be merged in Him and find complete union with Him, is the conclusion of the most recent scientific thought; and such a theory as that of Schelling, which contradicts our highest thoughts and aspirations, invalidates all thinking and reduces the religious consciousness to illusion.

§ 9.

Hegel.

Hegel traces sin to development and regards it as a necessary step in the evolutionary process. At the outset man is in a state of innocence, a state resembling that of animals, in which there is neither good nor bad; with this difference, however, that man, unlike animals, is in a condition in which he ought not to be, and therefore his state is evil. In this sense, says Hegel, the Christian doctrine that man is by nature evil [1] is correct and is loftier than the opposite, viz. that he is by nature good. The doctrine therefore of Original Sin finds a place in Hegel's scheme. But though man is by nature evil, he is potentially good. This is due to the fact that man is essentially Spirit, and as Spirit he is a free being and need not give way to impulse. Hence he is, while in a state of innocence and ignorance, in a condition from which he ought to liberate himself. Without this possibility man would not be free and Christianity would not be the religion of freedom; but he has the power to liberate himself, because even in his natural state he possesses a will which enables him to resist impulse and inclination.

The movement from innocence to virtue is inseparably connected with the advance from ignorance to knowledge, and this can scarcely take place without encountering sin. Man can only know evil to be evil by actual trial.

[1] *Philosophy of Right*, Dyde's Trans. 18, Addn.

The doctrine of the Fall[1] Hegel regards as a myth expressive of the first step in the process of development. The eating of the forbidden fruit of knowledge must anticipate the realisation of evil, and man must realise evil by experience before he can overcome it. The fundamental note of the Biblical conception of the Fall is that man ought not to be natural. In his animal state he is wild, and therefore is as he " ought not to be ". He is in a condition from which he ought to free himself. When wilfully persisted in, this state becomes sinful, and thus the Fall is an allegory eternally realised in man.

What, then, is Hegel's conception of evil? He declares it to be practically synonymous with selfishness, a theory which has had a deep influence on modern theology. As soon as the ego-sense begins, there follows division and separation. For God is a community,[2] and every man is part of that community. In a perfect community, such as God is, the parts are not independent. The whole is in every part, and every part is essential to the whole. But when independent existence begins, there follows a breaking away from the absolute unity. Man cannot exist as a self without being selfish, and when a man follows his natural desires he is evil. But selfishness is not the only element in the composition of sin. Coupled with selfishness there must also be knowledge, for man only becomes conscious that he is not what he ought to be through the growth of knowledge, and that, evidently, a knowledge of the good. To be guilty of sin, man's will must come into play, and he must possess the knowledge of what he ought to do; otherwise it is impossible to impute moral acts to him. Sin, then, is due to man's progress from moral ignorance to moral knowledge. When consciousness begins to awaken in the natural man, good and evil are not present as two clearly defined objectives; otherwise it would be difficult to explain why man should universally choose the evil and refuse to will the good. The truth is that he gives way instinctively to his natural impulses and then comes to realise by actual trial that to do so is wrong. His discovery that it is evil,

[1] *Philosophy of Religion*, Spiers and Sanderson's Trans. i 275 ff.
[2] *Studies in Hegelian Cosmology*, McTaggart, p. 244.

and that after sin there follows retribution or suffering, disgusts him, and so eventually leads him to the good. Thus, according to Hegel, sin is a necessary experiment without which there can be no virtue. That is what he means by saying that " the good man is good along with and by means of his will, and to that extent because of his guilt ".[1] He passes through sin, but leaves it for goodness by the free choice of his will. And leave it he must in the long run. Man has only to go on sinning long enough to have it borne in on him with an ever increasing force that it is not by yielding to natural impulses that self-satisfaction can be found.[2]

This leads to the conclusion that sin is a form of ignorance. This negative aspect of sin resembles the view of Spinoza, a view which, as has been already seen, is unsatisfactory as being at variance with experience, for no theory which minimises the reality of sin or which tends to reduce it to illusion or mere appearance can satisfy the conscience or explain the sense of guilt. What is valuable in the doctrine of sin propounded by Hegel is the recognition that whatever the reality of evil be, it is a reality of which man only becomes aware through the growth of knowledge, and that it is impossible to pass from ignorance to virtue without encountering sin.

§ 10.

The Defects of Hegelianism.

On the other hand, two fatal weaknesses in Hegel's theory may be mentioned. The first weakness lies in his assumption that sin must lead to virtue.[3] This does not mean, of course (as is pointed out by Mr. McTaggart in his able defence of Hegel's doctrine of sin), that no one can attain to a particular virtue without first wallowing in the corresponding vice ; but it is part of the Hegelian theory that persistence in sin brings such disgust and dissatisfaction to the person who commits it that he will eventually turn to virtue. This is utterly controverted by the test of experience. Sin, by being repeated, gradually loses its power to bring

[1] *Philosophy of Religion* iii 48.
[2] *The Hegelian Cosmology* 162–3. [3] Ib.

dissatisfaction and disgust. So far from leading necessarily to virtue, it is more likely to form a habit and to become ineradicable. Sin of itself produces nothing but further sin, and amendment becomes ever less possible. McTaggart defends Hegel's theory from the charge of being opposed to morality by asserting that "all that is required of a theory of sin in order that it may be harmless to morality is that it should not deny the difference between virtue and sin, or assert that sin is the greater good of the two. Hegel's theory does not do either." [1]

But to say that "there is no virtue which is not based on sin" [2] and that "the good man is good . . . because of his guilt" [3] is, whatever may be said to the contrary, to assign a value to sin, to place a premium upon it, and to raise it almost into the absurd position of a good, inasmuch as its result is finally beneficial. Indeed, Hegel actually makes a definite distinction between conscious and deliberate sin on the one hand, and innocence, which is mere ignorance of vice, on the other, and declares that though both are evils, yet of the two the former is the less. This he explains by saying that a deliberate choice of the bad implies at least some action of the reason and the will, and so is a step nearer to the goal of virtue than mere innocence, which has not yet started out on the only road which can lead man upwards.[4] This is contrary not only to the religious feeling of the ages but to the experience of the conscience, which declares that sin is on every ground to be condemned and abhorred, and that it is an evil from which no good can come.

The second weakness of Hegelianism is that if sin be necessary, it is not sin in the theological sense of the term. Though there is undoubted truth in the statement that the sense of guilt arises with the growth of knowledge, this statement must not be so pressed as to remove human responsibility, since this would be to remove guilt. If sin is the absolute necessity in the development of the spirit which it is represented to be by Hegel, how can we account for the existence of remorse and penitence? What meaning

[1] *The Hegelian Cosmology* 174.
[2] Ib. 234.
[3] *Philosophy of Religion* iii 48.
[4] *The Hegelian Cosmology* 234.

can we attach to forgiveness and atonement? Any theory maintaining the necessity of sin presents a deep problem for a Theodicy. Whether the necessity be regarded as a Divinely appointed stage in the moral evolution of man or an inevitable condition of our environment and temporal existence, nothing can obviate the conclusion that the blame does not rest with man, and yet the ascription of sin to the act of God in so constituting Human Nature is intolerable and impossible. From this dilemma there seems to be no escape. Hegel says that sin is a necessity owing to the progressive nature of man, and thus acquits him of all responsibility and guilt. Theology says that man has sinned by his own most grievous fault and is wholly and entirely to blame. Conscience and experience declare in favour of the theological view.

We pass on, therefore, to inquire what solution of our problem is offered by those who seek to avoid these difficulties by regarding sin as a purely religious conception and as a phenomenon to be explained as lying solely within the domain of theology.

IV

Theories which confine Sin within the Bounds of Religion.

§ 11.

Schleiermacher.

With Schleiermacher, as Dr. Orchard points out,[1] there arises a new method of approaching the subject of sin, a method which no theology can in future neglect, namely, that before we can investigate sin we must investigate the faculty that reveals it. That faculty is the intellectual power which enables us to grasp the conception of God. The sense of sin is dependent on the sense of God, or God-consciousness. God is the sole and absolute Cause in the universe and there is no independent human will, which, according to Schleiermacher, would imply a Manichaean Dualism. The entire dependence of man on God, as far as causation is concerned, would

[1] *Modern Theories of Sin* p. 77.

necessarily lead to the inference that God is the author of man's sin. This, however, Schleiermacher avoids by denying the objective reality of sin and making it only have a subjective existence, that is, he regards it as existing only in our consciousness. The sense of sin is the internal strife which arises in us owing to the inadequacy of our God-consciousness. God has ordained that we should attribute guilt to this universal feeling of deficiency, this consciousness of inadequate spiritual development, not because it is really sin, but so that there might be occasion for Redemption. 'As we have no consciousness of Grace without a consciousness of guilt, we must declare that the existence of sin is ordained for us by God with and by the side of Grace.' [1]

Sin, then, is the struggle of the flesh against the spirit, and the cause of this opposition is to be found in the history of the race as one of progress. Sin has its rise in the priority of man's sensual and intellectual development to his power of will.

The orthodox doctrine of Original Sin Schleiermacher rejects, and substitutes 'acquired habit' for 'inherited sinfulness'. Sin first rose in Adam, according to Schleiermacher's theory, owing to the conditions of Human Nature. The same tendencies must have existed in our first parents as in us, or they would never have sinned. The first sin is only the first appearance of sinfulness, and is no more than what might have been expected. Certainly it effected no change in Human Nature. But at the same time Schleiermacher does not deny Original Sin: or rather, he keeps the term as a concession to the traditional mode of expression, but gives it his own interpretation, which is that it is an inbred sinfulness, derived from our surroundings and from the accumulated sins of the whole human race. Sin is a thing of society; 'it is in each the work of all and in all the work of each'.[2] Thus Schleiermacher arrives at the conclusion that Original Sin is the source of all actual sin and is yet in its turn derived from the actual sins of the whole race.

The weakness of Schleiermacher's position seems to lie in this direction: by assigning to sin a subjective and not a real existence, he minimises the seriousness of sin, and by

[1] *Der Christliche Glaube* S. 80. [2] Ib. S. 71.

his conception of the relativity of the consciousness of sin he implies not only that it is solely found within the bounds of religion, but that it is necessarily found in the greatest degree in the Christian religion, whereas the sense of sin is actually more universal than the consciousness of God.

Moreover, in denying hereditary sin and in maintaining that our first parents were in the same position before sinning and subject to the same conditions as their posterity, he fails to account for their sin, since it could not in their case be due to their social surroundings and environment. If the individual will acted for itself when "it ought not" and without the operation of accumulated influences, we are back at the Kantian position, which involves arbitrariness and unintelligibility.

§ 12.

Ritschl.

Like Schleiermacher, Ritschl begins in his investigation of sin with the Christian consciousness. He, too, holds that sin is solely a religious conception and that the idea of sin can only be formed by comparison with the idea of good. It can only be known under experience of Christian redemption and is the 'negative presumption of reconciliation'.[1]

Ritschl boldly repudiates the old doctrine of Original Sin, and seeks to explain sinfulness by a development of the Pelagian idea of the "influence of example", and finds its origin entirely in man's environment. What he calls "the web of sinful action and reaction" in the world forms "a kingdom of sin",[2] which is the opposite and antinomy of the highest good, which is the "kingdom of God". This kingdom of sin which Ritschl substitutes for Original Sin consists in the general lowering of the moral judgement owing to the influence of evil example and to the vast complexity of sinful action in the world.

But the influence of an abstract body like the human race is by itself insufficient to account for the origin of evil

[1] *Justification and Reconciliation* (Eng. Trans.) 327. [2] Ib. 338.

in every member of the race apart from other predisposing conditions. Hence Ritschl recognises that these conditions must be sought in nature itself. The nature of man contains the elements of sin. "Evil", he says, "springs out of the merely natural impulses of the human will." [1] Will, being subject to development, has not at first perfect knowledge of the good, and evil must necessarily arise until that perfect knowledge is attained. Thus sin can only be regarded as a species of ignorance, and Ritschl's recognition of the factor of ignorance in the origin and growth of sin is something of which more recent theories have made considerable use and which no theology can in future afford to ignore.

Furthermore, Ritschl recognises degrees of sin, ranging from sin as ignorance to sin as final choice. Clearly, sin viewed as ignorance cannot be regarded with the gravity that theology is accustomed to attach to sin. It is, indeed, a necessary stage in the development of man as a moral being, and is by no means as guilty as determined sin, which is an activity of the individual will in the face of knowledge and of a realisation of the moral law.

Thus in the view of Ritschl the sins of those who are saved never go beyond the degree of infirmity, and in the full and absolute sense sin can only be committed by a final and obdurate rejection of Christ. What we need to guard against in this statement is the impression it is apt to leave, that because sin is pardonable it is not serious—as if nothing were serious but final damnation. Ritschl's doctrine is not misrepresented if we say that according to him the sins which can be and actually are pardoned are not properly sins at all—they are ἄγνοιαι or inadvertences, for which forgiveness is a matter of course; while with regard to what is really sin, viz. an offence against the Christian salvation, there is no such thing as forgiveness conceivable. A conception of sin different from this is surely required—a conception which avoids the error of extenuating its seriousness at every stage but the last.

We now pass to the last remaining method of attacking the problem of sin.

[1] *Justification and Reconciliation* (Eng. Trans.) 349.

V

Theories which seek to explain Sin from Empirical Observation.

§ 13.

The fifth school of thought seeks to explain sin not by philosophical reasoning but by empirical observation, that is, by evidence derived from demonstrable and observable facts of man's developing life. The chief representatives of this school may be taken to be Professor O. Pfleiderer, Dr. F. R. Tennant and Mr. S. A. McDowall.

Pfleiderer.

Pfleiderer traces the source of all evil to selfishness and declares that it has its origin in free-will. The will of the individual seeks to satisfy itself not in accordance with the good of others, but apart from and independently of the rest. Free-will, he says, is not the possibility, which indeterminism takes it to be, of turning to either side, and after any action of turning to the contrary action without any bias or hindrance. This was the error of Pelagius, which is contrary to the theory of development. The worst man could in that case become the best in a moment of time.

Pfleiderer rejects the idea of pre-existence as a method of explaining the origin of evil, and he abandons the traditional account of a Fall from goodness, on the ground that evil cannot exist in a will purely good.

The genesis of sin, according to him, is to be found in the universal tendency of man to satisfy at any cost his natural impulses. These impulses and desires are not in themselves necessarily sinful. None of the bodily appetites are sinful. Sin consists in their abuse and not in their use. The abuse of these natural impulses begins with the selfish gratification of them. It consists in the gratification of them after they have been prohibited.

The desire to satisfy the natural impulses is at first an instinct. It is at first the sole and irresistible law governing man's life. It is the will to live. Gradually, however, there

appear other laws restraining this desire and imposing limits upon its gratification. There are the laws of society. There are the laws prescribed by authority. There are the laws of moral judgement. These prescribe that the desires of the natural man must be kept in check. On some occasions they need to be repressed, it may be, only for a time. On other occasions they have to be entirely subdued. Prohibition enters into the life of the natural man as a new factor to be reckoned with. It appears as an opposing will. In the conflict that ensues, the natural desires exercise a powerful influence on the will of the individual and often refuse to be denied. Self-will is powerfully inclined to lawlessness. Hence the universality of sin is easily understood.

Regarded from this point of view, sin is manifestly of varying degrees of sinfulness. The first offence is the most venial, and each subsequent repetition becomes more grave than the one preceding. It cannot be supposed that man at once perceives that the external will which prohibits has a higher right to be obeyed than his own desire. The realisation of the rightness and the reasonable necessity of the command or prohibition only comes after a series of experiences in which the awakening moral consciousness makes the discovery for itself that gratification of self-will brings nothing but disastrous consequences, both physical and moral. Only gradually and at length are man's natural desires subordinated to the external power which forbids their satisfaction.

This theory regards evil as a necessary stage in human evolution. Every man must pass through this process of development. The natural or non-moral tendencies have to be moralised and brought under the dominion of the higher nature; but this is a difficult process and entails a constant struggle. The transition from innocence to evil is gradual; it is not a sudden and inexplicable change, such as the traditional theory of the Fall implies. And the transition likewise from evil to good is equally difficult and equally gradual. Every relaxation of effort in this struggle, every failure in the attempt, is sin.

Pfleiderer admits that there is a certain measure of truth

underlying the assertion of the presence in man of Original Sin, if by that expression be understood the evil inclination to lawlessness which, because it existed before moral consciousness awakens, appears as a natural, innate, radical defect of the will. It is not, however, strictly correct to call this defect sin, inasmuch as it is antecedent to morality and the effort after self-satisfaction is natural to man.

A difficulty here arises. If evil is not only a necessary stage in man's complete moralisation, but is actually sanctioned by God for the sake of the good which is not to be attained without it, where does guilt come in?

This must be measured by the power of an individual at any moment of his moral development to overcome lawless inclinations. As Pfleiderer says: "Every step in the development of conscience, every widening of the moral view, every increase in refinement of judgement or in instinctive feeling of right and wrong, augments the possibility of reaction against abnormal impulses, of overcoming the bad motives by good ones, and thus increases with man's moral freedom his responsibility for what he does and leaves undone".[1]

Professor Pfleiderer may be regarded as the first theologian who attempted to give an evolutionary account of the origin of sin in the individual, and this attempt furnished the main lines on which Dr. F. R. Tennant constructed his theory of sin in his Hulsean Lectures at Cambridge in 1901.

Any criticism suggested by this psychological explanation of evil will be more appropriately reserved until Dr. Tennant's elaborated theory of the Origin and Propagation of Sin has been briefly outlined.

§ 14.

Tennant.

Dr. Tennant[2] goes farther than Pfleiderer in his empirical account of the origin and nature of sin, and even if it be felt that his account is not completely satisfactory, he has at least formulated certain main principles that seem to

[1] *Philosophy of Religion* (Eng. Trans.) iv 38.
[2] *Hulsean Lectures* 1901–2.

be supported by weighty evidence and confirmed by the latest scientific discoveries—principles which seem likely to afford a valuable foundation for further investigation and study.

Following what are undoubtedly the right lines for a satisfactory and scientific treatment of the subject, he first considers the origin of sin in the race and discovers that, like other so-called origins, it was a gradual process rather than an abrupt and inexplicable plunge. The morality imposed by custom precedes introspective and personal morality, leading up to it by gradual stages, and when sin makes its first appearance it consists in the satisfying of natural impulses after they have been discovered to be contrary to a sanction recognised as authoritative. Natural impulses and inherited qualities are not intrinsically sinful. They are only the material of sin, and do not become actual sin until they are indulged in contrary to custom and law. The change from custom to law is itself gradual in the history of the race, and the moral law becomes the more exacting as the development of the race proceeds. Anthropological research shows that man was natural before he was moral. The actual point of transition is impossible to discover, for the process was as gradual as the development of the race. Sinfulness gradually rises from zero in the first stage to heinousness in the later stage of development, according to the degree reached by the moral standard.

Evil, then, is the continuance of practices and the yielding to natural desires after they have come to be regarded as conflicting with ethical sanction, or, in the words of Canon J. M. Wilson, "to the evolutionist sin is not an innovation, but is the survival or misuse of habits and tendencies that were incidental to an earlier stage of development and whose sinfulness lies in their anachronism".

What is true of the race is also true of the individual. Dr. Tennant goes on to show that individual development merely repeats the process of racial development. The human infant is a non-moral animal. He is born with natural impulses which are not in themselves sinful and which are uncontrolled by any moral sense. Moral sense is not

[1] *Origin of Sin* p. 95.

at first present, is not born with a child, but is gradually acquired. Not until the dawn of will and reason does morality first become a possibility, and until the moral sentiment appears the existence of sin is of course excluded. Good is at first that which is permitted and evil that which is forbidden.[1] Conscience arises by slow degrees, partly from human environment and partly from social heredity. The child begins to realise the presence in himself of something which represents his father or some other law-giving personality who says "Thou shalt not". At the bidding of this inner monitor he gradually learns that he must from time to time refrain from doing what he wants to do, repress his selfish desires and deny himself for the good of others. He begins to recognise a higher law and a stronger claim to obedience than that of his natural instinct to gratify his innate impulses. Thus before the child lies the mighty task of moralising his own nature. In this task is found the origin of sin, i.e. the failure to choose invariably the end of higher worth than that which appeals or attracts for the moment. This general failure explains the universality of sin. Hence Dr. Tennant defines sin as "an activity of the will expressed in thought, word or deed contrary to the individual's conscience, to his notion of what is good and right, his knowledge of the moral law and the will of God".[2] In this theory he endeavours to prove that sin loses nothing of its exceeding sinfulness. Our inborn propensities ought not to remain unmoralised. As soon as there emerges in man that moral ideal termed 'conscience', which calls him to account if in the face of knowledge of the right he yields to his natural desires, the deliberate rejection of the nobler impulse and the wilful surrender to his non-moralised passions constitute heinous sin and involve guilt of the gravest kind.

Dr. Tennant then endeavours to show that his theory affords a basis for a rational theodicy which can reconcile the holiness of God with the reality of evil, the two elements which above all things must be safeguarded from underestimation.

His theodicy may be said to consist in the attempt to establish two principles: (1) the independence of the

[1] *Origin of Sin* p. 106. [2] Ib. p. 160.

finite human will and its separateness from the Divine, so that the responsibility for actual evil may be removed from God ; and (2) the self-limitation of the omnipotence of God, which accounts for the Divine permission of evil in the world.

The first essential point is the assertion of the will of man as an initiating and causative force to establish the human origin of evil.

The doctrine of Divine immanence or the indwelling of God in man is to-day more prominent than the doctrine of the transcendence of God which monopolised the minds of theologians in the early part of the nineteenth century. Undoubtedly the truth lies in a union of the two beliefs, but the doctrine of the immanence of God, with its insistence on human responsibility, has greater practical value than the other aspect of the Deity, with its tendency to a pantheistic absorption of the human will into the infinite. This doctrine of Divine immanence teaches that God has created by an act of " self-differentiation an infinite variety of spiritual energies to which our souls belong ",[1] and the independence delegated by Him to these active agents is sufficiently complete to permit the initiation of new sources of causation. The finite spirit is endowed with real power to thwart goodness and to serve its own base ends or to work voluntarily with God for the fulfilment of His Divine purpose. God supplies the ideal, but the activity which wars against the flesh is ours. This independence, however, is not absolute. The separation of the individual from the Creator is only partial and temporary. The finite will has power to rise to higher things and to reach by progressive stages its perfect development, but this of necessity involves the opportunity of originating evil, i.e. of opposing God's will and of delaying the far-off Divine event to which we believe the whole creation moves—absorption of the finite into the infinite. As Tennant well expresses it : " Our wills are ours to make them His ".[2] The responsibility, then, for the actual existence of moral evil lies entirely with man.

But how is it possible to justify God's permission of evil ? If responsibility for the actuality of evil lies with man, responsibility for the possibility of evil and for the oppor-

[1] *Origin of Sin* p. 126. [2] Ib. p. 127.

tunities for its realisation lies with God. What answer has Dr. Tennant's theodicy to give to this difficulty?

Much, he says, which belongs to the Divine world-plan belongs to it only incidentally and is not in itself a Divine end.[1] Evil is only a by-product, like physical catastrophes: it is a contingent accident in a moral world and originates in other wills than that of God. The reason why the 'actualisation' of evil is permitted by a Being who is at once Almighty and All-Holy is that the prevention of evil would destroy the possibility of moral choice. If evolution had stopped short at the stage of lower animal life, there would indeed have been no sin, but neither would there have been any moral good. A moral being incapable of sin is a contradiction in terms. Man must have free-will to choose either good or evil; freedom of choice implies an alternative, and therefore of its nature it implies the possibility of evil. Inasmuch, then, as moral beings are infinitely higher and more precious in God's sight than conscious automata, even though the conscious automata were incapable of sinning and grieving the love of God, yet the establishment of the possibility of sin, so far from being inconsistent with the holiness of God, is the only conceivable method of its expression. The permission of evil on the part of God is a means adopted by Him for the moral development of man, and as such it is both necessary and good. Therefore the presence of sin in the world and the misery wrought by sin is not incompatible with Divine love. It involves a self-limitation of the omnipotence of God, but only with a view to the better fulfilment of the Divine purpose. God permits the possibility of the temporary and partial defeat of His own will in order that good may eventually prevail and in order that His relations with the finite spirit He has made for His own pleasure and glory may finally be made perfect.

§ 15.

Criticisms of Tennant's Theory.

Dr. Tennant reduces sin to failure to perform a task that is recognised to lie before all mankind, namely, the

[1] *Origin of Sin* p. 132.

moralisation of the natural impulses and desires, but to define sin in terms of failure is to make it purely negative and so to minimise it. Dr. Tennant himself discusses this objection in the Preface to the second edition of his *Hulsean Lectures*, but perhaps the best answer to this criticism comes from Mr. McDowall, who points out that there is a progressive world-plan which man can and must help forward. Sin is the conscious setting of the will of the individual to oppose this progress. By experience the conscious being learns that some applications of the will are right and others are wrong, according as they tend towards helping on the eternal evolutionary process or the opposite. Thus, although sin is negative in the sense that it is a failure to moralise the raw material of morality, " yet it is positive in that this failure is due to the conscious misuse of experience ".

There is a vast difference, too, in the guilt of sin viewed merely as a failure, even though it be conscious failure, to perform a very difficult task and the guilt of sin viewed as a deliberate, intentional and perverse adoption of a hostile attitude towards the moral law and the manifest will of God.

Yet Dr. Tennant endeavours to assert man's full responsibility for sin, while confessing that his early history seriously handicaps him. If the natural and pre-moral history of man precludes the possibility of his reaching moral consciousness without falling into sin, his responsibility—if by responsibility is meant guilt—is materially lessened, if it does not entirely disappear.

Perhaps, however, a distinction should be here drawn between responsibility and guilt. A man may be said to be responsible for a result brought about through an action performed by accident or in ignorance of certain facts. He may be responsible for a person's death by unintentionally injuring him; or he may, by administering unsuitable diet to one whose state of health he does not understand, be responsible for a serious internal disorder. Guilt, however, can only be applied to an action committed wilfully, with the full knowledge that it is wrong and of all that it entails. While, then, it may be admitted that man is in this sense responsible for sin committed in passing from the non-moral,

and therefore innocent, state of existence to complete moral consciousness, yet, inasmuch as he could not be expected to emerge from the one stage to the other without performing acts which he recognises, however dimly, to be sinful, the guilt chargeable to him is considerably reduced. It is difficult to see how Dr. Tennant can admit the vital effect on man's subsequent history of the conditions of life which precede the moral epoch and yet preserve the religious estimate of the exceeding sinfulness of sin.

Another question, raised by Mr. Gayford in the *Journal of Theological Studies*, April 1903, to which Dr. Tennant does not seem to do full justice, is expressed in this quotation: "Granted that the propensities which constitute the *fomes peccati* come to us from our animal ancestry, and are in themselves non-moral, the last step in the evidence should tell us what attitude the will itself at its first appearance is seen to adopt towards these propensities. Is it neutral? Does it incline towards the 'higher law' which is just beginning to dawn upon the consciousness? Or is it found from the first in sympathy and alliance with the impulses which it ought to curb? This goes really to the root of the whole matter: and to most thinkers, not only theologians but also philosophers, the phenomena have seemed to point to the last of these alternatives. It is this aspect of the question, the fundamental aspect, which Tennant really evades. He assumes without proof that the will from the first has been neutral as towards the lower impulses."

Dr. Tennant himself endeavours to answer this difficulty in a more recent book on *The Concept of Sin*.[1] He denies that the attitude adopted by the will towards these impulses and appetites before any moral enlightenment has been acquired is a moral issue at all. He, however, rejects the idea of a ready-made will with a ready-made bias, and says that the will itself is as subject to development as the moral sense. But in process of development it has to contend with already formed habits, and, under the guidance of the moral reason, to break them. The only bias or bent possessed from the first by the will is that which it makes for itself or

[1] *The Concept of Sin* pp. 141, 142.

for the personality to which it belongs, by its own activity. If there is any bias or bent in the will previous to the acquisition of conscience and knowledge of a moral code, it is due to the clamorous solicitation of sense and impulse for satisfaction, and cannot be called a bias either to good or to evil in the ethical sense of those terms, since good and evil do not as yet exist for the individual.

The able discussion, however, of this objection contained in the book in question, though, as far as it goes, satisfying to the reason, somehow fails to secure conviction because of the discontinuity which he still finds between the propensities of the self-conscious animal, the *fomes peccati* and the will.

The weakness of Dr. Tennant's theodicy seems to lie in the fact that the human will is not the only element in the production of sin. Man can only be held fully responsible for sin if, in addition to having the faculty of originating action, it can be proved that he has also a clear knowledge of the nature of the moral ideal and of its paramount importance for his being. But the degree of moral enlightenment possessed by a man at any moment in his life is not under his control. Therefore, to avoid attributing the responsibility for sin to God, it is not enough to show that the finite human will is independent and separate from God : it must be proved that a man's moral illumination is also independent of Him, or any attempt at a theodicy must end in utter failure.

Lastly, Dr. Tennant offers no adequate explanation of the sense of guilt. In tending to reduce the circle of human conduct to which 'sin' in the strict sense can be applied, his theory fails to confirm the judgement of the universal consciousness of guilt. It breaks down in its inability to fathom the depth of self-abasement which the sinner feels at the thought of his sin and which compels him to cry aloud in the agony of contrition : "Woe is me, for I am undone!" As the consciousness of guilt is a factor of experience that cannot be denied, serious suspicion is at once cast on the validity of any theory which fails to justify its verdict.

§ 16.

S. A. McDowall.

Proceeding on similar lines to those laid down by Dr. Tennant in his *Hulsean Lectures*, Mr. McDowall examines sin from a still more definitely evolutionary point of view,[1] while endeavouring to avoid the negative conception of sin as a failure to effect complete moralisation of the natural impulses which Tennant's theory suggests. McDowall argues that everything in the universe tends to run down like a clock, and the whole energy of everything that has life is instinctively directed towards arresting that katabolic tendency which means death and towards aiding the struggle for life when it seems in danger of extinction. Thus there is an eternal conflict between the cosmic forces of decay and an anabolic effort to preserve and renew the stream of life.

No form of life thus remains stationary. If it is not going forward it must be going backward, i.e. drifting towards extinction ; and if it is not going backward it must be going forward. If it be admitted, then, that man has reached the limit of physical evolution, there must be some other sphere in which development is taking place, or the continuity of the evolutionary process would be broken. That sphere is the ethical. Man has not reached the limit of moral and spiritual progress. Ethics are not merely a communal necessity ; they form the fundamental basis of the further development of man, and the salient feature of this development is the growth of personality, which is defined by McDowall as the self-expression of the individual.[2]

The study of the science of evolution has led in recent times to a realisation of the unity that underlies the whole world-development. There is the 'eternal Process', a great 'world-plan' to which every special form of evolution is subservient. That world-plan may perhaps be expressed, for want of a better term, by the statement that the whole world is tending 'Godward'. The human race is gradually increasing in knowledge, and with increasing knowledge its ideals are raised, it becomes more ambitious of ethical perfection, it allies itself more and more with the spirit in

[1] *Evolution and the Need of Atonement*, Camb. Univ. Press, 1914.
[2] Ib. p. 79.

the unending struggle between spirit and matter—in a word, it tends to grow more God-like, more divine.

Evolution implies progress, and progress implies a goal towards which the whole race of man is advancing. That goal is the ultimate end and object of the 'eternal Process' or 'world-plan', and it is to "bring into being a spirit that is perfectly free".[1] Every victory that man wins over matter means a corresponding gain in indetermination, i.e. the power to continue progress; it is a step forward towards throwing off the determinate katabolism from which he is emerging, but above all he is creating for himself a fuller personality, and personality is immortal, for it can never be absorbed again into the formless stream of things.

Here we come to Mr. McDowall's conception of sin. He regards it not so much as failure to perform certain moral imperatives or to achieve certain evolutionary ends but as a voluntary checking of the great process of creative growth;[2] it lies in throwing the weight of one's personality on the side of katabolism, instead of helping forward the stream of life. Only by obeying the vital impulse can man rise higher. When, therefore, he opposes the vital impulse, he is opposing the only thing in nature that is capable of progress.

That the individual will plays a prominent part in this is clear, but that there is any natural bias to evil in the will McDowall denies. The will is simply the result of the in-turning on itself of the consciousness[3] or vital impulse that underlies all progress. "The in-turning of the consciousness means self-consciousness, and self-consciousness means consciousness of volition, of power and of choice." The idea of the will being the ultimate cause of sin seems to be disproved by a clearer recognition of the fact that evolution is a much more extensive process than it was at first supposed to be, seeing that its sphere of operation is not confined to the physical world, but extends also to the mental and moral capacities of mankind. There is no such thing as a ready-made will. As man becomes a conscious being he gradually recognises in himself the existence of a force which

[1] *Evolution and the Need of Atonement* p. 78. [2] Ib. p. 79.
[3] Ib. p. 68.

urges him to do certain things and to abstain from doing other things, finding by experience that by following these inward promptings he gains greater mastery over himself, while by rejecting them he becomes conscious of deterioration. It is in experience, then, rather than in the will that the origin of evil must be sought. By experience the conscious being learns that some applications of the will are right and others wrong, according as they tend towards improvement or the opposite; and sin is the misuse of this experience.

But it may be asked how the hindering of the great world-plan can be called sin in the strictest sense, since it must be admitted that knowledge of the trend and purpose of the eternal process of progress must necessarily be confined to the few. To this McDowall replies that every conscious being learns by experience that to bend the will towards progress is right, while to bend it towards retrogression is wrong, because it entails destruction,[1] and destruction is a thing that the vital impulse urges every living being to resist to the utmost of its power, lest the race be swept away in the stream of katabolic change. We have seen, too, that the vital impulse is a progressive thing. Of this every human being is aware by its operation in himself. The whole world is animated by a spirit of unrest which urges it forward toward one goal. In proof of this, McDowall refers to the history of the Jewish race,[2] who had grasped the truth that God had a great plan for their nation and through them for the world at large. Failure to work with God in this matter by personal holiness was the Jewish conception of sin. This conviction is not confined to the Jew. It is instinctively felt by every human being—even by those who cannot apprehend it as a scientific fact. There is in every person the realisation, even though it be dim and only half-understood, that life has a purpose, and with this realisation comes a sense of the urgency of co-operation, a feeling that it is his duty as a living individual to help forward the movement and accelerate its progress. Man's very yearning after an ideal is evidence that he knows that the stream of life is moving towards a goal, and it is his consciousness of participation in this world-plan which

[1] *Evolution and the Need of Atonement* p. 74. [2] Ib. p. 81.

causes in him, when he wilfully opposes it, that inner conviction of guilt which Augustinianism with its doctrine of a corrupted nature found so difficult to explain.

What has this theory to say about the solidarity of mankind and the connexion of the individual with the community ?

Every nation must consciously aim at improvement if it is not to fall out of the main stream of progress. Absence of progress, or even equilibrium, means in the long run deterioration and death, and the nation that ceases to progress must in due course cease to exist, and progress includes moral and ethical development as well as mental and physical. This is what is meant by the often repeated statement that ethics necessarily arise with communal life. A nation, however, can only develop through its component individuals. Therefore no individual can cease to progress without injuring the whole community. No one lives for himself alone. By the defection of one, the community becomes the poorer ; by the defection of all, it ceases to exist. So the failure of one individual to develop ethically thwarts the progress of the whole society. Since, then, the possibility of ethical development rests entirely on the individual, on each one singly rests the future not merely of the community to which he belongs, but of the entire human race. It is this that from an evolutionary standpoint makes sin so exceedingly sinful. Each man who fails to go forward is using the freedom which he has gained to check the growth of freedom of the spirit and so to hinder the great world-plan. The actuality of sin, then, is derived solely from the individual will, influenced by its social environment and directed by personal experience. Solidarity and guilt each finds its recognition in this account of sin and theory of human nature.

Is there room in this theory for the work of a Redeemer ? Undoubtedly. The death of Christ is an historic fact : its significance is accepted by all Christian people : in some manner it reconciles man with God. But it is also true that the nature of redemption needs to be defined somewhat differently than in the terms to which we have long been used. Mr. McDowall's book, as its title implies,[1] is

[1] *Evolution and the Need of Atonement.*

an attempt to assign to the central fact of the Christian faith its true meaning from the new standpoint of the evolutionary theory of sin. His conclusions may be summed up thus. The true condition of evolution is altruism. Sin is over-emphasised individualism. By sin man leaves the course of evolutionary progress and strikes out in a morally wrong direction. This means a limited moral evolution, terminating in a cul-de-sac of moral and spiritual imperfection. The struggle of mankind to win freedom, the great struggle between the anabolic and the katabolic principles, has met with failure because of its immense difficulty. But is God's plan to be thus thwarted? This is inconceivable, and the only possible method, so far as we can see, whereby God could save man from the consequences of his sin and set his will again in progress towards freedom, which is the true goal of evolution, was by the identification not only of God with man but also of man with God.[1] Christ suffered and was buried. Pain and death were necessary to progress, and therefore the Incarnation must be a κένωσις and must be full of pain. In Christ was revealed the perfection of manhood. By Himself entering into the pangs of spirit fettered by matter, He liberated the spirit of man from its self-imposed bondage. Hence Mr. McDowall sees in the Incarnation the triumph of altruism.

The Atonement is not substitution: nor is it an object-lesson in perfect love and self-sacrifice. At least, it is neither of these things alone: it is something more. Jesus came to vindicate the great principle of altruism which underlay the whole of God's world-plan.[2] But man must accept that principle and make it his own before he can be saved. He can receive none of the benefits of the Passion except by the conscious dedication of his will to the cause of progress and the divine process of world-development. Only thus is the wall set up by 'race-rejection of ideals' broken down and the check to the continuity of evolution removed. Christ's death renewed the growth of fuller personality and aided the eternal process whereby a spirit is to be formed that is perfectly free and man is finally to become like God.

[1] *Evolution and the Need of Atonement* p. 171. [2] Ib. p. 177.

§ 17.

Evolution of Personality the Key to the Problem of Evil.

Modern scientific research as applied to the perplexing difficulties presented by the existence of sin has resulted in one undeniable discovery, namely, that evolution is the true key to the problem of evil. Evolution postulates the existence of evil. It postulates a struggle between two opposing principles, through which vital energy forces its way upwards to the attainment of higher values. It is based on the antagonism between 'good' and 'evil'. The 'struggle for existence' and the 'survival of the fittest' are recognised canons of evolutionary progress. Without the antagonistic force of evil to oppose the good there would be neither struggle nor selective survival. Evil, then, is a necessary condition of evolution, and evolution is the only phenomenon which can shed real light on this baffling problem.

But though evolution has long been known as a scientific fact, many erroneous views of evolution as a principle have been held, and it is only recently that its true operation has been realised. It is not true to say that evolution applies to one sphere of energy and not to another. Its operation is universal. It is not true to say that evolution is limited in its possibilities. Its range is infinite and its goal is absolute perfection. It is not true to say that evolution can exhaust its powers. It is a continuous and everlasting process: it is a necessary condition of life.

It has been said that evolution reached its climax with the formation of man and that when it had produced the human body its operation ceased. It may be doubted whether man has yet reached the limit of his physical evolution, but even if it be granted that there is no higher stage of development possible for the body of man, yet there can be no break in the evolutionary process. It must continue in another sphere. The line of further development is moral and spiritual. Ethical progress is a matter of experience and is visible no less in the individual than in the community. One of the first properties of self-consciousness

is the ability to recognise the possibility of moral improvement; and on the use made by the individual of the power of ethical development the future of the race of which he forms a member wholly depends.

Every part of the complex nature of man has its own evolution. Hence the will of man is subject to the same immutable law. It used to be thought that man was endowed at birth with a ready-made will. This was the error underlying all the controversies which raged round Free-will and Necessitarianism. The will of the child is in its infancy as much as his mind, and is subject to the same rules of development and growth. Freedom is not the beginning but the end. It is not the starting-point but the goal. Will first emerges in the course of the evolutionary process as a voluntary striving towards self-expression and self-realisation and a conscious effort to cope with and master matter. It has been described as the "in-turning on itself of the consciousness or vital impulse that underlies all progress".[1] As man begins to know himself, to recognise his partial freedom, he seeks to perfect it. In this way the will is developed and further freedom gained. This freedom may be used either to check the great cosmic process, in which case it leads to retrogression and death, or it may be used to further and help on evolutionary progress, in which case it leads to life and fullness of development. Free-will can only strictly be predicated of the final stage of human evolution. It is the ultimate product of progress. Absolute freedom is not attained until the will is entirely consonant and identified with the will of God. Then, and not till then, is free-will perfect and complete.

Then, again, it is only in recent times that attention has been seriously directed to the meaning of personality and its bearing on the problem of sin. The nature of personality is not easily defined. Professor Bergson describes it as 'self-consciousness'. It is a mystery which is dimly foreshadowed in that theory of the Incarnation which regarded it as the fulfilment of a destined plan for uniting man to God in still closer bonds. Modern thought seems to be moving towards the belief that it was with a view to the development of

[1] See p. 213.

personality that the world came into existence. Personality is an end in itself, intimately connected with man's spiritual relation to God, and when once created it is immortal. It can never be absorbed again into nothingness. Here, even more than in the will, with which, however, it is closely allied, seems to lie that causative force of self-expression which is able to oppose the stream of progress, aid katabolism and so create sin. Any further interpretation, then, of the nature of evil must undoubtedly be sought in the realm of personality.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL VIEW OF SIN

ANALYSIS

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CHAPTER VIII

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL VIEW OF SIN

(An attempt at reconstruction of the concept of Sin based on the known facts of psychological evolution and on the new science of psycho-analysis.)

§ 1.

Former Views of Sin Unsatisfactory. A New View required to meet New Facts.

We have tried to trace the views of Human Nature as implied in the concepts of sin prevailing in the very various ages of the Church. We have seen that there are two views in perpetual competition—a severer view and a milder view, the former being that specially associated with the great name of Augustine, which passed on into the theology of Calvin and the Jansenists, the latter being that which, roughly speaking, may be described as the view of the Greek Fathers—a view continued in the teaching of the Semipelagians and maintained by the Council of Trent. Augustine held that the effect of the Fall was to destroy in mankind the power to do right, to such an extent that Human Nature became entirely corrupt and depraved, the object of God's uttermost reprobation and wrath. The Greek Fathers, on the other hand, did not regard Human Nature as having become *totally* depraved through the Fall, but as retaining a large measure of natural righteousness; they defined 'Original Sin' as being such a weakening of man's will by the first wrongful act that it was not fully able to keep the animal appetites under control. We have seen the gradual acceptance of Augustinianism in spite of the protests made by the Semipelagian school, and its formal adoption by the Reformers, who emphasised its most repugnant features and introduced the monstrous figment of the 'total depravity' of Human Nature and the necessary damnation of infants dying unbaptised. Gradually, how-

ever, the reaction has set in. Calvinism is as much repudiated by Nonconformists as by members of the Church of England. Wesleyans, it may be noted, were always Arminians, and most Churchmen may be regarded as holding Semipelagian views, albeit unconsciously and instinctively.

We have also seen that the view of man's history put before us by modern science is entirely inconsistent with the idea of a 'Fall' of any sort. Modern evolutionary thought knows nothing of an alleged condition of 'original righteousness' or of a catastrophic departure from it; on the contrary, it sets before us the picture of a slow, gradual ascent from a purely animal stage, an ascent extending over hundreds of thousands of years, marked, no doubt, by many retrogressions and setbacks, but exhibiting an unbroken continuity between the hairy, low-browed, prognathous ape-man of the Pliocene geological epoch and the refined and sensitive European of the present century. The substitution of the scientific for the theological view of man's origin and early history provides a totally different view of sin and moral evil. Acts which we call morally wrong are the expression of primitive instincts and impulses, which were necessary to the well-being of our non-human ancestors, but which, under the conditions of modern social life, are now evil, not because they have changed their nature but because they are anachronisms. Like the "troublesome wisdom-tooth or the dangerous appendix", which have outlived their original usefulness in the body and now survive only to be the occasional causes of pain, disease or death, so man's carnal passions and innate desires are merely the survivals of appetites and instincts once necessary to the struggle for existence, but now out of harmony with the social fabric into which the human race has built itself.

It would seem to follow from this view that sin needs reformation only, and not expiation and satisfaction; the matter is summed up by a great scientist in these words: "The higher man of to-day is not worrying about his sins: his mission is to be up and doing". This position in regard to sin is far from satisfactory. The universal verdict of the human conscience cannot thus be dismissed and lightly

set aside. The old view has been weakened; the presumptions of theology have lost their hold; doubts have been cast on the seriousness of sin, but no consistent teaching has come in to reconcile theology with anthropology. The present is a time of transition, and such times are perilous. The clergy are constantly lamenting the decay of the sense of sin, but they will never be able to improve matters by bringing in dogmas, even though temperately stated, which have once for all been repudiated by the lay mind. A new foundation must be laid: we must have a new view of sin, a view consistent with our present knowledge of the evolution of mankind, which yet does not minimise sin's gravity.

§ 2.

The Genesis Story not to be rejected. The Doctrine of Original Sin falsely inferred from this Account.

The question first arises how far we may incur the charge of irreverence if we refuse to regard the first chapters of Genesis as serious history, and how far we become guilty of disloyalty to the faith we profess and to the religion of Jesus Christ in rejecting the doctrine of a Fall and Original Sin as its consequent.

The narrative in the second and third chapters of Genesis, as might be expected from the age in which it was composed, is not unlike the legendary history of early Greece and Rome, and may be regarded as originally a naïve folk-tale relating the circumstances in which the Golden Age came to an end and the misfortunes brought upon the first men by their presumption, and which was afterwards employed by the compiler of Genesis as the vehicle of instruction as to the nature of sin. Indeed, the substance of these chapters, as distinct from the allegorical and poetical form in which they are clothed, must be considered as representing objective fact, and it is broadly true as an account of human origins. Here we see the naked savage, lisping for his first words new names of beast and bird, innocent in sheer ignorance of evil, becoming dimly conscious of disobedience, of guilt and of shame, twining leaves to cover his nakedness or sewing together the skins of beasts, desperately fighting for existence against thorns and briars, bearing children who

murder one another in senseless jealousy. This record seems to be very little removed from the evolutionary view which says that man has fought his way up from the very dust of chaos, moving steadily onwards in spite of many setbacks and coming at last to a conception of morality and of God.

But it is impossible to extract from these chapters anything like the theological inferences of a Fall and of Original Sin. They are entirely devoid of any theological or metaphysical theories of a weakness of will or bias towards evil inherited by the descendants of our first parents. The theological doctrine of the Fall occurs neither in Genesis nor in the rest of the Old Testament; the sole Scriptural authority for it is to be found in the writings of S. Paul. Now, it is no longer possible to feel certain that all the ideas of S. Paul are necessarily identical with those of the Founder of Christianity; on the contrary, there is every reason to believe that he retained much of his antecedent thought when he passed from Moses to Christ, and that Christians are not of necessity bound to accept, as inherently Christian, much that S. Paul taught, not as a Christian but as a learned Jew. Even an Apostle could not change his past. His theology is of Christ, but his anthropology is Jewish. The teaching of Jesus, as recorded in the Synoptic Gospels, contains not the slightest allusion to an alleged Fall, nor to a hereditary bias towards evil, but this idea was familiar to the Rabbinical teachers of the first century A.D.

It is therefore probable that the conception of the Fall and Original Sin as it appears in Rom. v 12–14 forms no part of the original Gospel, but represents ideas imported by S. Paul into Christianity from the Rabbinical Judaism in which he had been brought up. If, therefore, we wish, according to the modern catch-phrase, to get 'back to Christ', we must go behind S. Paul and sweep away the doctrine of the Fall and Original Sin as mere speculations which we are at liberty to consider for ourselves without being committed to regard them from the standpoint of one whose views were moulded by Jewish antecedents, except in so far as he had consciously remodelled them to fit his new faith.

There is no need to discard the fascinating story of Gen. iii, so long as it is read in its natural sense and apart from the very questionable philosophy which has been inferred from it. It distinctly teaches that the entrance of sin into the human heart is always and everywhere due to the misuse of choice, and the preference of the lower to the higher nature. It regards the passions as having been the cause of man's fall, but not the fall as having been the cause of man's passions. The imported view thus seems to be wholly inconsistent with the intention of the writer, who is endeavouring to give a picture of the way in which men sin; and it is perfectly obvious that men sin in that way, viz. by the misuse of choice. Otherwise, every subsequent sin was of a different nature from the first sin, and this account would lose its moral value, and would indeed become, as it so evidently has become, an excuse for sin, that it was the fault of somebody else, for which fault the sinner cannot be held guilty. Thus the moral of the story has been entirely inverted by subsequent commentators, who have by this misconception been responsible for centuries of confusion and error in regard to the meaning and origin of sin.

§ 3.

The New View of Sin to be based on Psychology.

What, then, is to take the place of this pre-Christian anthropology which has been foisted upon the Genesis story? What view of sin can be substituted for the traditional account? Any theory propounded must, to gain acceptance, fulfil two vital requirements. It must do justice to man's sense of sin, which tells him that his sin is the result of his own unfettered choice, for which he is alone and entirely responsible. The sense of sin is an element of the utmost importance to mankind. It cannot be ignored, for it is the chief incentive to moral progress and to ethical development. Without a sense of sin there can be no guilt. Guilt is the intellectual judgement pronounced by us on our wrong-doing, arising from and based on our sense of sin. A modern theory of sin must not do violence to the verdict of the human heart.

Such a theory must, on the other hand, be in absolute

agreement with the view of evolution and anthropological science. This seems to make sin a necessity and an essential stage in the cosmic process, and in so doing is opposed to the theological notion of sin as that which ought not to be. Harnack is inclined to think that reconciliation between these two opposing points of view is impossible, but it is incredible that convictions imperative to the conscience should be contradictory or inexplicable to the reason. It is hard to suppose that there can be any such wide gulf fixed between the intellectual and the moral life of man.

Some means of harmonising these two demands there must surely be. It might be found by speculation, and there are those who are attempting to face the difficulties imposed by such a task. There is, however, another and a more excellent way. The mind itself must be examined in order to find out what solution it has to give of that anomaly in its constitution which theologians call 'sin' and which, in relation to society, is termed 'crime'.

Fortunately, this essay has not to conduct the examination—it has only to see how far the present results of that form of introspection which we call psychology fit in with—

(1) The recognised facts of evolution.
(2) The spiritual fact of sin and the sense of sin as felt universally by man.

§ 4.

Personality a Prerogative Peculiar to Man.

Psychology teaches that man differs from the non-human organisms from which he has sprung and by which he is surrounded in the possession of what is called 'personality'. Our personality is the one fact about our nature of which we can never entertain a doubt. It is the starting-point from which the psychologist sets out in quest of further knowledge respecting himself and his environment, for personality implies consciousness of self.

The personalities of different types of men differ enormously, but the personality even of the lowest existing

savage is different in kind from anything that we can describe as resembling it in the higher vertebrates. We cannot refuse to admit that man has a value peculiar to himself, in that, so far as we can see, he alone among living animals consciously strives for goodness, beauty and truth. Thought, memory, will, purpose, all can be seen in the instincts of insects and the lower animals, but personality, involving, as necessary qualities of its being, reason, will and a moral ideal, is incomparably the highest phenomenon known to experience, and is the peculiar prerogative of man. We see in man three elements : the material body, the life-principle, and the element of human personality. The last has only slowly reached its present complexity, and is still far from the power and perfection that we can imagine it will some day possess.

Evolution as a principle of life cannot cease, otherwise life itself would end. There is no equilibrium in nature. All is progress, or if progress is arrested, death ensues. Scientists have contended that the evolution of the material part of man ended with his appearance on the scene about a million years ago as the final and complex result of the development of rudimentary forms of life. But the evolutionary process by no means ended with its first stage. The line of development continued in another sphere. Hitherto all living organisms that had existed on the surface of the earth, from the speck of protoplasm up to the majestic saurians of the secondary period, had been mere mechanisms, wound up in such a way as to produce the appropriate action in response to a given stimulus—mere bundles of sensory-motor reflexes. But the coming into existence of man marked the intervention of a third term between stimulus and reaction, namely, a reflective self-consciousness with the power of distinguishing ' I ' from everything that is not ' I ', with its corollary of ' will ' or the ability to balance considerations, to select motives, and to choose one from amongst two or more possible courses of action. But his mind was in its infancy. Man's mental powers were so undeveloped, his self-conscious reason so weak, that he was still largely under the control of the powerful physical appetites inherited from his animal ancestors. In

this region, then, evolution renewed its process in order to secure a new end. With the evolution of the mind there began also the development of the moral sense, based on such natural impulses as parental and filial affection, which have been rightly described as "the raw material of full morality", and which, beginning in selfish desire, lead on to sacrifice. The sense of sin takes the same place in the spiritual development of man as is taken by the vital impulse in the physical.

This view enables us to correlate the whole process of physical, mental and spiritual evolution from its earliest beginnings in reflex action and aneuric consciousness to its higher development in self-consciousness and moral and religious perception.

But why do moral and intellectual evolution not keep pace? Mental development ought to mean spiritual development; intellectual growth should invariably be attended by moral growth. In actual experience the contrary result is sometimes found. Why is this? The answer is to be sought in the sphere of personality. Animals have consciousness but not personality. In all vital organisms below that of man the consciousness is only of the instinctive order, and does not rise to the higher, self-conscious, reflective and spiritual level. In man consciousness took a mighty leap forward and upward. It became reflective; man became the object of his own consciousness, and thus attained a new and spiritual value. He became a person.

§ 5.

The Duality of the Mind: Conscious and Subconscious.

Now, the main teaching of psychology bearing on the subject of personality is the duality of the mind, the conscious and subconscious, or even unconscious mind, which latter may be taken together. It teaches that beside the threshold or supraliminal consciousness, which really means the normal waking consciousness, there is a subliminal consciousness which lies outside the ordinary range of the mind's operation. For example, none will deny that while a man is asleep and his normal consciousness is in abeyance, his subconscious mind may be in a state of great activity.

The conscious mind is that part of man which is endowed with the power of choice and volition; it can reason and invent; it can think and plan and reckon.

The subconscious mind, on the other hand, is the seat of the instincts and the natural impulses. To it belong the animal passions, habits, and the almost unconscious desire of self-gratification. Through its involuntary action the bodily appetites make their clamorous appeal for satisfaction.

In relation to evolution the conscious mind is the latest development. Multitudes of living creatures get on without it. It only finds itself in man. This agrees with the discoveries of scientific knowledge and with the records of progress. The survival of the fittest does not mean the survival of the strongest, for these have perished, but the survival of the thinkers—those most possessed of reason and will.

The conscious mind is as yet only half developed. There are many things done by insects far more perfectly than we can do them, but the insect never gets any further. It makes no mistakes, and therefore never learns. There is no duality in the insect, and therefore no progress. It possesses instinct but no conscious mind. Man is slowly becoming a rational animal, and his instincts are slowly coming more and more under the control of reason.

In man there is duality, and all the disagreeableness of a transition state. Our present conscious mind is an unfinished thing; our personality is in the making. Man is in process of passing from the subconscious to the conscious—from the natural to the spiritual—from Adam to Christ.

What, then, is sin? It is being influenced by the subconscious instincts, tendencies, desires and habits when the time has come to pass under the higher rule of reason and of conscience.

The subconscious is primitive, and is that part of the mind which we share with lower animals. It is, as has been said, the seat of the instincts, passions, appetites. These are not wrong, for they cannot be dispensed with. They are parts of our nature, and we can no more do without them than without our senses. As Butler points out in

one of his famous sermons on *Human Nature*,[1] our appetites, passions and senses in no way imply disease, nor, indeed, do they imply deficiency or imperfection of any sort; but only this, that the constitution of nature is such as to require them. To argue that we ought to eradicate our passions because they are lacking in the Supreme Being is as absurd as to suggest that we ought to get rid of our senses because God discerns things more perfectly without them.

But what in that case becomes of sin? Does that vanish? Does it become natural and excusable, that is, excusable because natural? No; for God's whole object for man is to effect the transformation of the crude instincts into something higher. Our passions, our appetites and our senses are a God-given aid to supply what is lacking in our imperfect Human Nature, and so far from being suppressed as a weakness, they must be used as a support to reason and intelligence while the reason and intelligence are weak and undeveloped. The exaltation of will power has been in recent years the special doctrine of certain philosophers, but that doctrine rests on false assumptions and is now largely discredited. Experience teaches that the will frequently fails to accomplish its resolves. One thing is willed, another performed. S. Paul enunciated an eternal truth when he declared: "What I would, that do I not, but what I hate, that do I". Life is full of examples of the impotence of the will[2] and of its dependence on some other power. That power is the power of the instinctive emotions. It is they which give the driving force to the will. The time may come when the conscious mind is so fully developed that we shall be able to dispense in large measure with the instinctive emotions and give ourselves up entirely to the control of pure reason, but that time has not yet come. Meanwhile the will must work in conjunction with the instincts: it must utilise the potent forces that have their origin in the far past, forces which must not control reason but must them-

[1] Sermon V, *Upon Compassion*. It is remarkable that Butler hardly ever refers to the Fall in these sermons. His treatment of the necessity of the passions is masterly. Read in the light of psychology, these sermons lose all their difficulty. It is a relief to find that the master of English Theology is at one with our newest knowledge.

[2] For the impotence of the will see the valuable essay of Baudouin, *Suggestion and Autosuggestion*, esp. pp. 37, 116 and 180 (George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1920).

selves be directed and controlled by reason. They must not be allowed to dictate to man or to gain the supremacy over him, but must be regulated and transformed to nobler purposes—must, in a word, be spiritualised.

§ 6.

The Power of the Natural Instincts.

The strength of the instincts has not yet been properly appreciated, nor is it fully realised how great a part they play in common life. They dominate our whole human existence, and so far from being mere brutish survivals, as many cultured persons have thought, they are a powerful factor which will have to be reckoned with and taken account of in connexion with the problem of sin, alike by the social reformer and by the theologian of the future. This has been recently shown by Dr. W. McDougall in his treatise on *Social Psychology*, and to him we owe the first recognition of the intimate relationship between the instincts and the emotions, and of their paramount importance in, and practical bearing on, social life and human conduct.

It has furthermore been demonstrated by psychologists that the chief source of human energy is the subconscious and not the conscious mind: it is psychic rather than intellectual. Not in the deliberate choice of the will, but in the emotion of the soul, is to be found that sudden access of strength which can perform the apparently impossible task. The instinct of self-preservation has frequently given to a desperate man surrounded by the enemy the strength of six. The maternal instinct bestows on a woman almost superhuman power to defend her child against overwhelming odds. Fear has been known to enable a man, pursued by a savage bull, to scale a wall which he could never afterwards accomplish by power of will alone.[1] The instinctive emotions, then, are, humanly speaking, the chief sources of our human energies. They are a potent force for good or evil, according to the way in which they are treated, and constitute the main driving power of life. The instincts cannot be ignored in the future as they have been in the past. They have only recently been recognised by sociologists, but their religious value is yet to be fully understood.

[1] For the power of the instinctive emotions see Essay III in *The Spirit*, by Captain Hadfield, edited by B. H. Streeter (Macmillan, 1921).

There must not be repression. Any attempt to repress the instincts, though it is even to this day advocated by many moralists, is doomed to failure, and must be productive of disaster. An instinct may be suppressed for a time, in which case we are fully conscious of the impulse, but do not allow it to affect our action. In repression the thing goes a stage further, and an instinct or an emotion connected with an instinct is driven into the depths of the unconscious, so that we no longer feel the impulse. It still exists, but seems to have come under the ban of what Freud[1] calls the Censor or Door-keeper, which prevents it from reaching the conscious levels of the mind. Not only is it practically impossible to eradicate deep-rooted hereditary predispositions, but the act of trying to do so dams up the streams of power which nature has provided. All instincts, as has been seen, have latent within them a vast amount of energy which is constantly striving for expression in action. If suitable action is denied, as it is to a repressed instinct, the energy, in its struggle for expression, gives rise to those unconscious mental conflicts from which spring most of our latter-day neuroses. Repression is essentially an evil thing which tends to throw the whole of the unconscious mind out of balance. The danger of this is shown by the phenomenon known as shell-shock, which is solely due to the repression of fear. Repression of the sex instinct is as bad. This is, of course, the great problem of the boarding school to-day, as it was of the monastic institution in the Middle Ages, and up to the present no satisfactory solution has been found. The treatment of the passions must not be merely negative. This only drives them farther in, to be dammed up in the unconscious by Freud's Censor and to become buried complexes—to burst out later perhaps into madness.

§ 7.

Repression of the Instincts advocated by the Church a Mistaken and Harmful Teaching. They must be sublimated.

The error of the Church in the past has lain largely in its treatment of the instincts; it has either ignored them

[1] The chief exponent of that form of psychology known as Psychoanalysis. He first put forward his special views in 1895.

or it has repressed them. This attitude is in great measure responsible for its impotence and failure to-day. The old saying of the Roman satirist still survives in all its bitter truth, " You may expel nature with a pitchfork, but it will always return ". Mankind will always answer to its old stimuli, and the instinctive impulses which the Church once hoped to have got rid of by repression will reappear in a thousand different forms.

Christianity has tended to a narrowness which has often caused its rejection by the lay mind. It has been negative, whereas it is essentially positive ; it has been a law rather than a Gospel, a scruple rather than an enthusiasm, and so falls short of its first glorious simplicity, that reduced ethics to the single commandment of love. Christianity to-day is largely the residuum of fifty generations of pedants, who have done for the Gospel what their predecessors did for the prophets of Israel. Theology has meant antipathy to Human Nature, whereas in Christ there is nothing but the most profound and all-embracing sympathy. Strange that the nation which produced a Shakespeare should have so fallen down before the great god propriety. Shakespeare finds in man nothing that he would lop off. He accepts nature and finds it beautiful in its entirety—he touches the real even to its filth, and lifts the ideal as high as heaven. Let Shakespeare reinterpret Christ, and let him who saw man as he is explain to us the yet greater power of Him who came not to destroy Human Nature, but to raise it to its highest development, most human when most divine.

The Church must shift its ground. It must abandon a purely negative attitude in regard to the instincts in favour of teaching which is definite and positive. That is the need and the demand of the present day, and unless it can in future be shown that Christianity directs and converts the instincts and the passions to useful and harmonious ends, unless it ' sublimates ' the instincts, liberating instead of repressing the free energies residing in them, it will never commend itself to the modern mind, which has now learnt to regard the instinctive emotions as being for the most part healthy, and certainly implanted in man for a definite and salutary purpose.

What method of instruction must the Church adopt in substitution for the useless and now discredited system of repression? Teaching must be clear to be effective and must be definite to have a chance of gaining acceptance. The basis of the new teaching will be altruism. The instincts must be directed to the good of others and not to selfish ends. Sin is selfishness. It is clearly the duty of those possessing this knowledge to produce in others, by influence, by sermons, by written articles, a similar knowledge, to show the multitude what to seek, that seeking they may find.

Evolutionists have hitherto largely studied only the evolution of the individual, and the evolution of the group, though closely connected therewith, seems almost to have passed unnoticed. Yet here is the key to the whole. Wherever selfishness is the only or even the principal motive, the group—be it family, pack or tribe—breaks up. The uphill task is for the minority possessing this knowledge to impart it to the majority, to cultivate in the public mind a will to serve. Christ's work was to give the world a will to serve. That work has been progressing for nearly two thousand years. It must now be accelerated by a fresh effort. Selfishness is the root of all wrong, past and present. Neither this nor that section of the community is solely to be blamed, but man in general, in yielding to his animal instincts for his own base ends, instead of moralising them and using them for the benefit of the human race. God has always desired and always will desire good to triumph; it rests with man to co-operate with Him by making altruism the basis of all his actions and to ensure its final victory by self-sacrifice. The transformation of the instincts and the use of their vast potentiality for the benefit of mankind is the greatest work of life, which every individual must aid and further to the utmost of his power, unless he would defeat the purpose for which he came into the world.

The reproof of sin is its resistance to the whole process of evolution. The subconscious mind is the *flesh*; the conscious mind is the *spirit*. To subordinate the spirit to the flesh is to oppose the development of the conscious mind

and to arrest the only course of evolution which now remains for man, viz. evolution in the mental and moral sphere, which arrest means of necessity katabolism and death.

Christianity is the very religion to assist this divine process : it is the very religion Human Nature needs. Christ took our passions and dealt with them in the only way which could conserve their energy and press into human service the immense powers that lie latent therein. He took our ambition, but made it the ambition to raise men and draw them to Himself. The Cross means the consecration of every instinct, every passion, every emotion to the work of Christ, which was the service of mankind. To bear the cross is not mere self-denial, but the sacrifice of the lower to the higher self. The instincts must be 'sublimated'. The direct expression of the instinct in action must be modified and the liberated energy turned into new and ethically more valuable channels. Sublimation and absence of repression are essential for a healthy development of the conscious mind.

§ 8.

The Sublimation of the Instinct of Fear.

The instinct of *fear* affords a good example of the way in which the instincts may be dealt with to our profit and to the development of our higher nature. This instinct is a primitive precaution against danger, and is closely connected with the desire for self-preservation. No wonder, then, that it never leaves us as long as we value our lives. But, as Captain Hadfield points out in his *Psychology of Power*, owing to the comparative safety afforded by modern civilisation, there is a superfluity of fear, and the instinct remains in man in a greater degree than is necessary for the preservation of his life. This superfluity is apt to find an outlet in ways which are futile and absurd. Most people either fear immoderately things in regard to which a certain measure of fear is both reasonable and natural, or they fear things which ought not to be feared at all. The result is that our lives are filled with needless worry and anxiety, often to the ruin of our health and to the undoing of our peace of

mind. Some men have frightened themselves into madness; others have gone so far as to take their own life under the influence of groundless apprehension.

This instinct must be sublimated, not repressed. It must be directed under the control of reason into proper channels. It must be turned to good account for the benefit of ourselves and others. Wrongly used, it debases and degrades, making life a misery; rightly used, it raises us to unsuspected heights of energy and usefulness. Fear that paralyses the nerve and unfits us for further effort is the crude instinct of the subconscious mind, seen in the case of the terror-stricken animal or the cowering bird unable to move or to escape its foe. But fear which, under the guidance of reason, inspires action, stimulates effort, and encourages the utmost use of existing faculties is the same instinct transformed and converted to higher ends. Fear of poverty rescues us from idleness and sloth; fear of failure spurs us on to greater exertion and further toil; fear of disease leads us to temperance and self-restraint; fear of death makes us cautious, active and alert. In short, the instinct of fear, transformed and sublimated, so far from enervating man or obstructing human enterprise, becomes a well of energy, and is itself a force of incalculable value to mankind.

In this sense, the fear of God is not a servile thing, as has been thought by some. It is not the mere shrinking from punishment, nor yet the cowardly dread of a stern taskmaster, which can only lead to the concealment and neglect of the talents entrusted to our care, but it is the natural emotion of awe, elevated and ennobled to inspire us to active service and indifference to self, so that in humble reverence we may further the Divine purpose in the world, labour for God among our fellow-men, and hasten the coming of His kingdom here on earth.

§ 9.

The Sublimation of the Instinct of Pugnacity.

The instinct of *pugnacity*, though closely connected with that of fear, affords another illustration of the manner in which a natural desire is capable of transformation from

a lower to a higher end. It would seem at first sight as if this instinct, however suitable for a primitive state of existence, is out of place in civilised society, where peace, not war, is the ideal condition and ought to be the aim of all human endeavour.

The combative instinct leads to strife and bloodshed if its natural impulse in uncontrolled and is yielded to for selfish ends. Animals fight to satisfy their hunger, to save their lives and to keep what they possess. Self-preservation is a law of nature, and the instinct of pugnacity prompted primitive man to appease his craving for food, to protect his own life and the lives of his dependents, and to retain the spoils he had already won.

In modern life the laws step in, and by protecting life and property for man, render this primitive instinct to a large extent superfluous and unnecessary.

Is this, then, an instinct which must be repressed ? That, for reasons already stated, is both undesirable and impossible. The instinct must find an outlet, and such an outlet is afforded by friendly rivalry in games and exhibitions of skill, which stimulate and promote efficiency and health. Those most addicted to sport of various kinds and most proficient at it are generally the least provocative and quarrelsome of men. On the contrary, they are, as a rule, found to possess more chivalry and self-control than those whose instinct for combat has been either over-developed or repressed.

The very fact that games are based on a primitive instinct explains the tremendous hold which they have on the mind of boys, particularly when one remembers that the evolution of the individual epitomises the evolution of the race, and that the boy must in many ways be regarded as corresponding to primitive man.

Our own country affords a good example of this. There has been little mental repression in English history. Our intense national devotion to outdoor sports and games has sublimated the fighting instinct. We still have it in perfect working order, as was proved during the recent war, to the surprise of the so-called militaristic nations. In peace we have for centuries turned its energy into other

channels, and in so doing have learnt determination, teamwork, and, above all else, we have acquired the power of keeping our temper and our heads in an emergency. These two things, absence of repression and sublimation of the combative instinct through sport, account not only for the vigour of the fighting spirit in Englishmen when need calls it forth, but for the very existence of the British Empire.

The instinct of pugnacity, when transformed and sublimated, is directed to altruistic ends. It becomes protective, not aggressive. To take up arms for others, to help the weak, to succour the oppressed, to deliver the victims of injustice and wrong, is to utilise this instinct for right and noble purposes.

The life of Christ was a crusade against unbelief and vice. True, His battle was waged with other weapons than those devoted to war and slaughter: "They that take the sword", He said, "shall perish with the sword". Yet every day He fought for justice and for truth, though He refused to do so for Himself. In this way He ennobled and sublimated the instinct of pugnacity, and thus set us an example that by fighting for purity and right we might gain increase of energy to serve our generation and confer no little benefit upon society at large.

§ 10.

The Sublimation of the Instinct of Curiosity.

Again, the instinct of *curiosity* has always been regarded as an impulse that ought to be repressed, on the ground that it is a reprehensible tendency in the individual to interfere in things with which he has no concern. In the eyes of moralists it is a sheer weakness of Human Nature without any redeeming feature or social value. This is a most unjustifiable assumption and is due to utter ignorance of the immense utility of the instinct and the purpose for which it exists.

The primitive form of this instinct and the form in which it occurs in the lower animals is the inquisitive desire to peer into all that is unfamiliar and to examine closely anything novel or strange. This not unfrequently leads to

disaster: the prying animal, for example, falls into the huntsman's snare and becomes the victim of its own curiosity.

The same result is often seen in man when curiosity is indulged in merely for the sake of self-gratification. Sometimes it takes the form of prying into other people's affairs, sometimes of committing some indiscretion in order to gain experience. In the first case it is idle and annoying; in the second case it is pernicious, and may even be attended by fatal results. The busybody may possibly do no further harm then irritate his neighbours, but the victim of an overpowering desire to 'see life' may be led into dire calamity. One often hears it said: "I did it just to try what it was like". The desire 'just to try' has ruined many a promising career and blighted countless happy homes. An act makes a habit, and a habit makes a character. Chance visitors to gaming-halls have been known to become confirmed gamblers; medical students who have 'just tried' cocaine have developed into drug-takers; casual tasters of strong drink have turned into drunkards, and young men have fallen into licentious habits solely through giving way in the first instance to morbid curiosity.

So far as this instinct is a survival of mere animal inquisitiveness, it is to be condemned as being evil: it is the subordination of the reasoning faculty to a subconscious primitive impulse. But rightly used and directed into proper channels, it may be converted to excellent and philanthropic purposes, in which case it becomes a reservoir of energy which stimulates research, promotes discovery, encourages invention, adds to knowledge and leads to higher things.

To the instinct of curiosity we owe the scientific discoveries made after years of tedious research. To the same instinct we owe much of the medical skill acquired by patient and laborious investigation. To the same instinct we owe the unveiling of many of the mysteries of Nature whereby mankind has greatly benefited in the past—nor can we fail to believe that Nature possesses yet untold secrets containing vast potentialities for remedying

human ills which she will yield to those alone who, in obedience to this instinct, patiently and diligently pursue their scientific research, regardless of labour or reward. May we not say without fear of exaggeration that but for the instinct of curiosity many of the greatest achievements of Europe during the last thousand years which have contributed to the advancement of mankind could never have occurred? This instinct, then, like others, must be viewed as a potent source of energy and usefulness, and is capable of being sublimated into a power for social service and for the benefit of man.

It is worthy of notice that the tendency of the Church has ever been to place a ban upon curiosity. It has discouraged investigation and independent thought. It has expected its members to take blindly ready-made opinions and to accept implicitly the dogmas it has imposed. This is entirely opposed to the method of our Lord, who reverenced whatever the learner had in him of his own. He merely guided aright the instinctive tendencies, fostering whatever was of native growth, and was glad when His words induced a man to think on his own account. Thus He sought to rouse curiosity by means of parables.

§ 11.

The Sublimation of the Instinct of Sex.

Another instinct residing in the subconscious mind is that of *sex*—a powerful impulse necessary for the reproduction of the race. This instinct is, perhaps, with that of self-preservation, the most primitive of the instincts inherited by man from the animal kingdom. But, like that of fear, it also seems to exist far in excess of its need for the preservation of the species, and the surplus of this emotion tends to flow into wrong channels. Hence arise fleshly lust and the mere gratification of carnal desire, which debases and destroys the higher nature and is subversive of all virtue and of all ethical progress.

The attitude of the Church towards this natural instinct has in the past inclined towards suppression, partly because of the constant abuse of the sexual impulse, and partly because of an erroneous identification of the act of pro-

creation with sin, a survival from the monastic days, when celibacy and continence were extravagantly exalted as a Christian ideal.

The result of the suppression of this instinct has been frequently found to be disastrous, and, apart from the vice for which enforced celibacy has been in the past responsible, many of the nervous ills in people of both sexes treated by the medical profession have been traced to this cause, and this alone.

The question, then, arises whether this instinct is capable of sublimation. Can transformation here take the place of suppression? Is it possible for the excess of this impulse to be raised to nobler ends? That the answer is in the affirmative is at least suggested by the fact that the sexual instinct has given rise to some of the most admirable qualities that have adorned mankind. Chivalry, honour, knight-errantry, profound reverence for women, all had their root in, and in great measure sprang from, this impulse.

Love in its highest form is undoubtedly the sublimation of the sex instinct. It is the tenderest, most fragile of the human emotions, yet it may be "stronger than the grave". Sometimes it comes to a man or woman slowly, gently, unnoticed, making the very soul its own; sometimes the vision flashes suddenly, and the whole world is illuminated by its splendour. It speaks with an irresistible voice of chivalry, honour and self-sacrifice, and like some old Hebrew prophet it pours bitter scorn on things base and evil. In a word, no human emotion is capable of leading men and women to higher acts of self-abnegation and devotion to the welfare of others than the instinct of sex in its sublimated form. Noble thoughts and feelings take the place of low desires, and from this root springs all that is pure and holy in human life.

Then, again, the sexual instinct is intimately connected with the parental instinct, which is not merely a desire to propagate the species, but a strong impulse to cherish and to protect. Men and women alike feel an innate longing to foster someone belonging to them and dependent on them who looks to them for maintenance and preserva-

tion. In short, the desire to "have someone to care for" is part of the sexual instinct and is practically universal. This natural longing may in the unmarried find a noble and altruistic outlet. Men and women to whom marriage is denied may transform their suppressed parental instincts by devoting themselves to children, by feeding the hungry, by protecting the weak, by nursing the sick, and by ministering in countless ways to those who need their help. As Captain Hadfield points out in his essay on this subject already referred to, the instinct of sex, as revealing itself in the desire to "mother" the lonely, has led many a woman during the recent war to marry an invalid or a cripple simply to gratify her maternal yearnings in caring for him.

Lastly, the instinct of sex, as manifested in admiration for beauty, may be sublimated and find its true expression in the development of the artistic sense. The phrase 'wedded to art' is not merely a cant expression denoting whole-hearted devotion to some artistic pursuit. It contains a further truth. It implies that art is capable of transforming the emotion of the soul and of giving the desire to create and the desire to admire (both of which are included in the instinct of sex) an object which calls forth and absorbs the highest energy of which this passion is capable. As the noblest forms of sculpture, painting, and even music, have been in the past inspired by love, whether sacred or profane, so it is impossible to foresee to what heights of creative art men under the influence of this instinct may yet advance.

§ 12.

The Psychological View of Sin true to the Teaching of Christ.

Enough has been said to show how the instincts in their cruder form, as handed down to us by our brutish ancestry, must be sublimated and the powers which lie latent within them be redirected to nobler purposes. We may transform where we cannot suppress, and on this theory a whole dogmatic ethic might be based, and be not the less dogmatic because it takes into account facts of Human Nature often ignored in the past.

Indeed, this ethic is precisely the ethic of the Christian religion, for the teaching of Christ, in fact if not explicitly, was based upon a value for the creative impulses and a hatred of everything that represses them; and in its doctrine of forgiveness it implies a recognition of the unconscious—"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do". Christianity combines a readiness to forgive with a very clear standard of ethical judgement; it is both judicial and pitiful, because it recognises that for the most part men know not what they do or what they are. The Christian religion is the only religion which tends to liberate energies capable of transforming the living soul into a quickening spirit. Its doctrine of love towards God and man harmonises the instincts with one inspiring purpose, thereby destroying a conflict of emotions which is one of the main causes of weakness, and by setting free instead of suppressing the full powers of mankind, gives man perfect freedom to perform the will of God.

The history of theology shows that men can rarely grasp the full orb of truth at once. The facts of faith are so great, the realities they certify are so large, that the mind must needs be content to grasp but a part of their implications. No doubt the basal facts of Christianity are few, but they are infinite in content, and the meanness of our minds can hold but little of their meaning. It would seem as if we must be satisfied to apprehend little by little and part at a time of that which is revealed. A century ago Christians made all things turn round the atoning death of Christ. Then came a period when their faith was expressed in terms of the Incarnation. Perhaps it is now time that we should emphasise the full ethical value of the unconscious and the sublimation of the hereditary instincts. We know how men can pass their days with powers of body and mind undeveloped and with faculties dormant, never discovering the possibilities which lie buried in the secret depths of their personality. In like manner men may also miss their share in the full energies of the spirit. So many are unaware of the immense reservoir of power latent in the unconscious, ready for them to tap. They are blind to the potency of the

instinctive emotions, which, when rightly used, would open up for them undreamt of resources of strength and give them in abundance energy and life. Life demands expression, and Nature is lavish in her gifts to those who will use them and devote them to altruistic ends, for such ends harmonise the soul. Men hear the warning of the Church that sin ought to be resisted to the uttermost, but they look around and see it as a universal fact. Thinking that they find experience at variance with theology, and conscious of their weakness and their inability to succeed where others have failed, they are inclined to give up the struggle, to cease to worry about sin, and to pass on their way ignoring it. They lack the confidence and the determination necessary to fight against their selfish desires, because they are ignorant of the real nature of sin and the real source of power waiting for them to use in this eternal conflict, if they will but call it forth.

This is precisely the true teaching of Christianity. The recognition by psychology of the fact that there is unbounded energy residing in the emotions and that the right exercise of the instincts brings fresh access of strength is in entire agreement with the Biblical claim that the spirit is power. No student of the New Testament can fail to notice the emphasis it lays on the element of power in religion. "All things are possible to him that believeth." The promise "ye shall receive power" was followed by the confident assertion: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me". What was the Pentecostal gift of the Spirit but a new strength, an energy which, though rightly called Divine, was really inward, an enhancement of power which surmounted obstacles, overcame difficulties, and enabled weak men to perform heroic deeds, to achieve the apparently impossible, and to work miracles of faith, of endurance and of missionary activity?

§ 13.

The View that Sin arises in the Unconscious is not Subversive of Ethical Judgement.

The discovery, or rather the growing awareness, of 'the unconscious' is having an effect, which must still

increase, upon ethical theory and practice. The human being, as a whole, is to be judged, and must judge himself, ethically. But, it may be urged, a great part of that whole is not subject to the conscious action of the will; therefore ethical judgement seems unfair, if it implies praise or blame, reward or punishment, in so far as it affects that part of the self which is not consciously controlled. Yet it has seemed to some of the greatest minds in the past that the unconscious, even more than the conscious, is the subject of ethical judgement. The lie in the soul, the sin against the Holy Ghost—these phrases both express ethical judgements of the unconscious; and they imply, what as a matter of fact is here affirmed, that the unconscious is to a large extent, and ought to be, under the control of the conscious, that the unconscious should be guided, led, ruled by the conscious, and that the unconscious must be drawn away from base self-gratification and be directed by aid of reason and the higher emotions to nobler purposes, must, in short, be transformed and sublimated by the conscious, or condemnation necessarily ensues. There is no part of us immune from ethical judgement, because the more obvious and more superficial part of character controls the deeper and more hidden quite as much as it is controlled by it. All through the ages men have recognised this, in fact if not in theory; for they have valued most the instinctive virtues and hated most the instinctive vices. Good manners, we say, come from the heart, by which we mean from the unconscious. We trust or distrust a man most confidently by what we discern of his unconscious; and our own judgements are most secure when they have something of the unconscious in them.

Here a remark may be made about a theory of the unconscious put forward by certain psychologists who differentiate between creative and possessive instincts, asserting that the former have value and are capable of sublimation, but the latter not. Those who adopt this view fail to see that possessive instincts are not really instincts at all, but inhibitions. When I have got, then I would keep: I would put a check on my own positive activities and on those of other people. The real problem

is not to destroy these negative impulses, but to get behind them to the positive impulses which they impede, and to achieve a society in which the positive impulses will be able to realise themselves.

We must think, then, of sin as something inseparably connected with personality—something which emerges and asserts its character at all stages and levels of human development. It is resistance to the Divine process of mental evolution in man. It is unfaithfulness to the moral ideal—refusal to moralise the animal instincts and to use the energies latent within them for the benefit of others instead of for the gratification of selfish desires. The moral ideal, it will no doubt be said, varies; different people have different ideas of what is God's will in regard to the use of those elemental forces inherited by man from the far-off past in the process of self-transformation by Grace. That is quite true, but it only means that there are differences of endowment and of privilege in men; it does not affect the truth that at every stage of our life we have the responsibility of subordinating the instinctive emotions to moral ends which for us have absolute authority. The law of God is an ideal which defines itself through conscience in a form appropriate to each successive moment of our existence; and the obligation of it is never less than unconditional. It is not wicked to have passions, but it is wicked not to transform them, and it is as truly sin to neglect to utilise their vast power for the good of others as finally to turn one's back on Christ and His salvation.

§ 14.

Psychological Definition of Sin, Original and Actual.

It follows from the foregoing that 'Original Sin', which has for some years fallen into discredit as a theological doctrine, represents nevertheless, though under a misleading and erroneous name, a psychological fact. Original Sin may be defined as *the universal tendency in man, inherited by him from his animal ancestry, to gratify the natural instincts and passions and to use them for selfish*

ends. This definition goes farther than the unsatisfactory explanation of 'Original Sin' as being merely something negative, as, for example, the absence of 'sanctifying Grace'; it shows it as a positive flaw or defect which is only seen to be such when our *de facto* nature is compared with what it was intended to be. It has become a taint in the race. But whilst in the abstract it may be said to deserve God's wrath, as representing the marring of His plan for man's development, yet in the concrete, as manifested in particular individuals, Original Sin is not 'sin' at all in the strict sense, but rather the possibility of sin, or a high degree of liability to sin, higher than ought to be.

Actual Sin manifests itself as *selfishness resulting from over-individualised personality.* Personality is not to be regarded as a definite entity. It is, as it were, a stream constantly receiving from other streams and giving to them. The evil in it is disruptive: the good is the unifying factor. Our present consciousness is an unfinished thing. Our personality is in the making. It is in this direction that our evolution now tends, and the tendency must be helped and not thwarted. The perfect personality, of which Christ is our sole example, is wholly strong because wholly good. By virtue of its perfection it resists the evil flowing from other personalities, but it gives of its strength to them. Our Lord was the type of what we may hope to be when the Christ in us has struggled into existence.

Psychology has thus opened up lines along which one may look to see a new view of sin prevail—a view not less serious than that held by theology in the past, but even more serious, because of the issues at stake, without, however, involving men in hopelessness or despair. It is to be hoped, too, that this practical view of sin may in due course effect that complete reconciliation between science and religion which has for years been longed and prayed for by all earnest men.

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